



Cabinet Office



Disability Unit

Disability Action Plan: Consultation

CP 873

This consultation begins on 18/07/2023
This consultation ends on 06/10/2023



Disability Action Plan: Consultation

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
by Command of His Majesty

July 2023



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About this consultation

To: This consultation is aimed at anyone with an interest in the action the government will take during 2023 and 2024 to improve the lives of disabled people. Disabled people and disabled people's organisations may be particularly interested but anyone, including any organisations or individuals, may respond.

Duration: From 18/07/2023 to 06/10/2023

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How to respond: This consultation is available in a number of formats, including:

- Full-Screen BSL Video / BSL Inset Video
- Welsh Translation
- Easy Read
- Large print
- Web accessible PDF and HTML
- Braille
- Hard copy
- Audio CD

Cabinet Office is using the online platform Citizen Space to collect responses to this consultation and can be found on the following web address: <https://equalityhub.citizenspace.com/disability-unit/disability-action-plan-consultation>

Alternatively, you are also able to send responses to:
disabilityactionplan@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Additional ways to feed in your views: A series of stakeholder meetings will also be taking place to support this consultation. For further information, please use the “enquiries” contact details above.

Response paper: A response to this consultation will be published on this web page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/disability-action-plan-2023-to-2024>

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Glossary: UK Government departments

Cabinet Office (CO) - supports the Prime Minister and ensures the effective running of government. This includes taking the lead in certain critical policy areas including GOV. UK One Login and veterans. The Disability Unit (DU) is part of the Equality Hub within the Cabinet Office.

Department for Business and Trade (DBT) - supports businesses to invest, grow and export, creating jobs and opportunities across the country. This includes securing global investment from businesses and investors and championing free trade and economic security.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) - supports culture, arts, media, sport, tourism and civil society across every part of England. This includes championing sport for all at every level, supporting our world-leading cultural and creative industries and enhancing the cohesiveness of our communities.

Department for Education (DfE) - is responsible for children's services and education, including early years, schools, SEND, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England. This includes helping disadvantaged children and young people to achieve more and making sure that local services protect and support children.

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) - secures our long-term energy supply, bringing down bills, energy efficiency, fuel poverty and halving inflation.

Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) - responsible for improving and protecting the environment, aiming to grow a green economy, sustain thriving rural communities and support our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries.

Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) - (works with NHS England) supports ministers in leading the nation's health (hospitals, GP and dental services) and social care to help people live more independent, healthier lives for longer.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) - supports communities across the UK to thrive, making them great places to live and work. Including accessible housing (existing and new build, private and rented, supported housing), planning systems, accessible buildings and accessible elections.

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) - responsible for driving innovation that will deliver improved public services, create new better-paid jobs and grow the economy. Drives scientific and technological advances, including online media literacy, research and development funding.

Department for Transport (DfT) - works with agencies and partners to support the transport network that helps the UK's businesses and gets people and goods travelling around the country. DfT also plans and invests in transport infrastructure to keep the UK on the move. This includes accessible transport of all types (for drivers and passengers).

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) - responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. As the UK's biggest public service department it administers the State Pension and a range of working age, disability and ill health benefits to around 20 million claimants and customers. This includes employment support (including Access to Work and Disability Confident, Work Coaches, Jobcentre Plus) and pensions.

Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) - pursues the UK's national interests and projects the UK as a force for good in the world. FCDO promotes the interests of British citizens, safeguards the UK's security, defends our values, including disability inclusion, reduces poverty and tackles global challenges with our international partners.

His Majesty's Treasury (HMT) - is the government's economic and finance ministry, maintaining control over public spending, setting the direction of the UK's economic policy and working to achieve strong and sustainable economic growth.

Home Office (HO) - plays a fundamental role in the security and economic prosperity of the UK. This includes immigration, security, law and order (policing in England and Wales), fire and rescue services in England, visas and immigration, Border Force, the Security Service).

Ministry of Defence (MOD) - works for a secure and prosperous UK with global reach and influence and will protect the UK's people, territories, values and interests at home and overseas, through strong armed forces and in partnership with allies, to ensure our security, support our national interests and safeguard our prosperity.

Ministry of Justice (MOJ) - works to protect and advance the principles of justice to deliver a world-class justice system that works for everyone in society. This includes laws, courts, tribunals, magistrates, prisons, probation service and offender health.

Ministerial Foreword



At the heart of this government's agenda is the ambition to make this country the most accessible place in the world for disabled people to live, work and thrive.

Every part of government is working together to transform the lives of disabled people in the UK for the better and ensure disabled people can participate fully in society.

There is already significant work being taken forward across government in areas that disabled people have told us are a priority. From reforms to employment and welfare through the [‘Transforming Support: Health and Disability White Paper’](#), to strategies to improve health and social care through the [‘People at the Heart of Care White Paper’](#), we have been delivering on our commitment to improve support for disabled people and tackle the barriers they face.

Over the past two years, this government has delivered a number of important policies and programmes that will improve disabled people's lives - including the passage of two landmark pieces of legislation last year; the British Sign Language (BSL) Act and the Down Syndrome Act.

But there's still further to go to build on this progress.

That is why we announced plans to develop a new ‘Disability Action Plan’. Demonstrating our continued commitment to supporting disabled people, this plan will set out the immediate action the government is taking in 2023 and 2024 to improve disabled people's lives, as well as laying the foundations for longer-term change. This consultation marks the listening stage of the Action Plan.

I am immensely proud to be the Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, championing disabled people's needs and aspirations across the UK Government. Since I was appointed to this role, I have been honoured to meet disabled people from all backgrounds, right across the country, who have been generous enough to share their stories and their experiences with me. I know of the challenges that disabled people face every day, simply to enjoy the same opportunities as everyone else.

That is why I'm pleased to be introducing this consultation, which sets out proposals for immediate actions that we think are important to help transform disabled people's everyday lives for the better. It includes many of the issues disabled people have told me matter most.

But this consultation is not meant to be the end of a journey. Rather, this is a first step - and a chance to make sure that we're heading in the right direction.

Ensuring the voices of disabled people are properly heard is a priority for this government. The findings of this consultation will inform the published Disability Action Plan. Your views and experiences are important to help shape the positive action that the government will take - and I want everyone that wants to, to be able to have their say.

I would like to thank you in advance for contributing to this consultation. Together, we can change disabled people's lives for the better.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Pursglove', is positioned above the name and title. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Tom Pursglove MP

Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work

Executive summary

Disabled people can experience barriers to participating in society in the same way as everyone else. The UK Government is committed to creating a society that works for everyone, where all can participate fully and be included in society.

The government is delivering for disabled people - in just the last year, we have supported the passage of 2 landmark pieces of legislation, the British Sign Language Act and the Down Syndrome Act.

The new Disability Action Plan will set out how we will go further, taking concerted action across government to improve disabled people's lives. The Disability Action Plan is separate from the National Disability Strategy. It will set out the action we will take in 2023 and 2024. The strategy, which set out our long-term vision, is subject to ongoing litigation and is currently paused¹.

This consultation marks the listening stage in the Action Plan's development. We have identified a number of positive actions that might be taken now to improve the lives of disabled people. We came to these through:

- literature reviews across a wide range of sources, with a particular focus on research based on the experiences of disabled people
- reviewing existing government policies relating to disability and disabled people in this country and around the world
- ongoing engagement, not related to the Disability Action Plan, by ministers and officials with disability stakeholders and disabled people's organisations

We are holding a full public consultation on these proposed areas for actions to help gain a greater understanding of whether these are helpful things for the government to focus on and how these might best be delivered if they were taken forward. This consultation is not intended to set out a full, detailed list of the actions which the government will deliver. Rather, it is a chance for us to make sure that we are heading in the right direction and to gather information about problems and potential solutions.

This consultation is an opportunity for everyone - disabled people, disabled people's organisations, and other interested parties - to have their say on the Disability Action Plan. We are consulting in an accessible way to ensure all disabled people who want to take part can do so. The consultation is open to everyone in the UK, but it only includes actions for the UK Government to take forward, and not the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (see page 13 for more information).

Each government department has a responsibility to consider the needs of disabled people in their policies and work to make improvements - as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty². Chapter 3 of this consultation sets out the actions that departments across government will

¹ The Government previously published the National Disability Strategy which set out our long-term vision, however the Strategy is currently paused pending the outcome of an appeal against a court decision which found that the Strategy had not been lawfully consulted on prior to publication.

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

take over the period covered by this Action Plan, 2023 and 2024. These actions are subject to departments' own consultation approaches, where appropriate and are not individually consulted on within this consultation.

The Cabinet Office's Disability Unit (DU) works across government to support and develop policies that deliver the government's vision - to create a society that works for everyone, where all can participate fully, and be included in society. The main focus of the questions in this consultation are on the areas for action that will be taken forward by DU. Chapter 4 sets out these actions, with an opportunity to comment on these directly.

At the end of the consultation document in Chapter 5, there is an opportunity to respond to the Action Plan as a whole. Hearing feedback on the areas of action proposed in this document is an important part of this listening stage.

When the consultation ends on 06/10/2023, we will consider all responses to the consultation carefully before publishing the Disability Action Plan. The findings will inform the final content of the Disability Action Plan.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose

Through this consultation, the UK Government is seeking views on proposed actions to be included in its upcoming Disability Action Plan. This consultation is not intended to contain lots of concrete, specific policies or reforms. It is an initial step to make sure policy development direction is correct and it marks the launch of the listening stage of the Action Plan.

The final plan - informed by the consultation findings - will set out the immediate action the government will take in 2023 and 2024 to improve disabled people's lives, as well as laying the foundations for longer-term change. This plan will form part of the government's commitment to create a society that works for everyone, where everyone can participate and be fully included.

We are inviting responses to our proposals from anyone interested in these issues, particularly disabled people and disabled people's organisations across the UK. Respondents can give feedback on either the entire Action Plan, or specific actions within it. Copies of the consultation have been sent to a number of organisations specific to areas of action in Chapter 4, as well as the following disability-specific organisations and networks:

- Chairs of the [Regional Stakeholder Network](#) - a cross-England network of disabled members of the public. There are currently over 100 members of the RSNs across the country, organised in 9 regional areas
- CEOs of the Disability Charities Consortium - consisting of Scope, Leonard Cheshire, National Autistic Society, Mind, Mencap, Sense, Royal National Institute of Blind People, Royal National Institute for Deaf People, Business Disability Forum
- DPO Forum England policy leads - an independent collective group of over 30 Disabled People's Organisations working with thousands of disabled people across England
- The [Disability and Access Ambassadors](#) - a cohort of senior business leaders across 20 different sectors, who encourage improvements in the accessibility and quality of services and facilities in their sector for disabled people
- Representative disabled people's organisations and networks across the Devolved Administrations, including: Disability Action Northern Ireland, Inclusion Scotland, Scottish Independent Living Coalition, the Welsh Disability Equality Forum, the Disability Rights Taskforce and Disability Wales.

However, this list is not meant to be exhaustive or exclusive and responses are welcomed from anyone with an interest in or views on the subject covered by this paper.

Alternative accessible formats of this consultation are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/disability-action-plan-2023-to-2024> which include:

- Full-Screen BSL Video / BSL Inset Video
- Welsh Translation
- Easy Read
- Large print
- Web accessible PDF and HTML
- Braille
- Hard copy
- Audio CD

A braille version can also be requested by contacting:

Email: disabilityactionplan@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Postal address: Disability Action Plan team, Disability Unit, Cabinet Office
Ground Floor
10 Victoria Street
London,
SW1H 0NB

Telephone number: 08081756420

Background

There is already a significant amount of work underway across government which will have a meaningful impact on the lives of disabled people. Over the past 2 years we have:

- supported the passage of 2 landmark pieces of legislation, the British Sign Language Act and the Down Syndrome Act
- delivered an additional £1 billion in 2022 and 2023 for the education of children and young people with more complex needs
- launched an online advice hub on employment rights for disabled people
- delivered improvements to the Access to Work programme
- introduced a new Passenger Assist app supporting thousands of rail users
- strengthened the Victims' Code with enhanced entitlements for disabled people
- updated the National Design Guide and published the National Model Design Code to set out the characteristics of well-designed places and to help local planning authorities to prepare their own local design codes
- made King Charles III England Coast Path as easy as possible for disabled people to use - over 2,000 miles of the path has now been approved, with 850 miles open
- seen 1.3 million more disabled people in work now than in 2017 - delivering a government commitment 5 years early

Major cross-government work is being taken forward by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to reform adult social care, and by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to reform the health and disability benefits system. These are long-term reform efforts and will continue alongside the actions listed in this document.

In 2021, the government published the [National Disability Strategy](#), which set out an ambitious long-term vision to transform disabled people's everyday lives, across multiple delivery bodies. The National Disability Strategy is subject to ongoing litigation and is paused pending the outcome of an appeal.

The Disability Action Plan is a separate piece of work and will focus on immediate, tangible changes that the government can make in 2023 and 2024.

These actions are areas where targeted policies or joint activity across government departments can make a tangible difference to disabled people's lives in the immediate term or where meaningful progress can be made towards a longer-term goal.

Geographic reach

This Action Plan has been produced by the UK Government. We recognise that decisions made by the UK Government may affect the lives of disabled people across the UK, where policy has not been devolved.

Many of the policy areas relevant to this Action Plan are devolved. Devolution recognises the value of such policies being tailored to the particular needs and wishes of the people in each part of the UK. We recognise and celebrate the diversity of approaches pursued across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on issues that have been devolved. This Action Plan respects devolution agreements - actions outlined will only be implemented in the countries where devolution agreements state that the UK Government retains ownership of the issue.

Chapter 2: Government achievements over the last year

This chapter details some of the government's main achievements to improve the lives of disabled people in the last 12 months.

Disability Unit (DU)

DU worked to implement the British Sign Language (BSL) Act 2022. The act recognises BSL as a language of England, Wales and Scotland. As part of this, DU set up the [BSL Advisory Board](#), the first dual-language board advising the UK Government. The majority of board members are d/Deaf BSL users.

DU worked to raise the profile of disability inclusion internationally. For example, they took part in successive [United Nations Conferences of State Parties on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (including 2022 and 2023), and the first-ever [G7 Disability Inclusion Summit](#) in September 2022. In the UK, they expanded the [Disability and Access Ambassadors](#) programme to include more sectors.

DU continued to build the experiences of disabled people evidence base. This includes working with partners to produce a new questionnaire and conducting or commissioning specific pieces of work to fill evidence gaps.

They have also been working with other government departments to better understand the impact of the cost of living on disabled people. A new UK panel survey will help them to:

- build their understanding of the disproportionate impact of the cost of living and products and services on disabled people
- fill in data gaps to better target policy and support to those who need it most

Cabinet Office (CO)

CO continued to improve the accessibility of its GOV.UK One Login system. The Government Property Agency, an executive agency of CO, published guidance on inclusive design of government property, such as in the [Workplace Design Guide](#) and technical annexes. CO also worked with under-represented groups, including disabled people, to encourage them to apply for public appointments. The new [Apply for a Public Appointment](#) system has been developed to be as accessible as it can be.

Department for Business and Trade (DBT)

DBT is focused on supporting everyone, regardless of background to participate and progress in the labour market fully. This includes disabled people or people with caring responsibilities. They do this through policies such as carer's leave and flexible working.

DBT is supporting unpaid carers in the UK to balance their caring responsibilities and work commitments in a way that supports their own health and wellbeing through a new right to carer's leave for employees.

DBT promotes the benefits of flexible working for employers and employees. DBT is legislating to make the right to request flexible working a ‘day one’ right, alongside other changes to make flexible working more accessible to all employees. These changes will support more open and constructive engagement between employers and employees to find suitable flexible working arrangements by:

- requiring employers to consult with an employee, as a means of exploring alternative options, before rejecting their request
- enabling employees to make 2 flexible working requests a year (up from 1)
- reducing the employer response time from 3 months to 2
- removing the requirement for the employee to explain the expected impact of their request on the employer

These plans were published in December 2022 as part of the government response to its [consultation on flexible working](#). While the consultation response focused on supporting contractual flexible working, DBT also committed to launch a call for evidence to develop understanding of non-contractual flexible working. This will look at the type of ad hoc or informal flexibility people may need - for example, to attend a one-off appointment.

The legislative changes on carer’s leave and flexible working will be implemented through the [Carer’s Leave Act](#) and the [Employee Relations \(Flexible Working\) Bill](#) which is currently progressing through parliament.

DBT also made significant progress in digital inclusion through trade agreements. These can provide opportunities for disabled entrepreneurs and disability-led businesses, as well as other protected groups, to increase participation in international trade.

Whilst we recognise that there is further work to be done in this area, the UK has agreed clauses related to digital inclusion in the signing of our Free Trade Agreement with New Zealand in 2022 and Digital Economy Agreement with Singapore in 2022.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

DCMS and its non-departmental bodies, including Sports England, Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, worked to improve the inclusion of disabled people in volunteering, sport, arts, culture and heritage.

The DCMS [Volunteering Futures Fund](#) worked to make volunteering more accessible, including for disabled people.

Sport England worked to increase the number of disabled people taking part in sport. This included:

- £1 million of specialist disability investment as part of its ongoing ‘recover and reinvent’ work which scales up successful interventions that engage disabled people in physical activity
- 47 grants through the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Activity Fund to projects benefiting autistic people
- £40 million in the 2 financial years to March 2023 through its [Together Fund](#) (a continuation of its Tackling Inequalities Fund) reaching 1,900 projects directly supporting disabled people

Birmingham 2022 had the biggest integrated para sport programme in Commonwealth Games history. More para athletes competed than ever before, and the games hosted the first-ever 3x3 wheelchair basketball. This built on the Commonwealth Games' track record of inclusive para sport medal opportunities.

Arts Council England worked to increase investment in disability-led organisations. They increased the number of disability-led organisations in their portfolio to 32, compared to 2 between 2018 and 2022. The [DCMS and Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund](#) allocated £4 million in grants to 33 projects that aim to make museum collections more accessible for all visitors, through upgrades to displays, access points and interpretation.

Other capital funds operated by DCMS, including the Public Bodies Infrastructure Fund and Museum Estate and Development Fund, have supported upgrades and projects aimed specifically at improving the accessibility of cultural venues, from the Museum of the Home in London, to Fort Nelson in Hampshire, and Tate Liverpool.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund worked to make heritage more accessible. This included:

- supporting employment for disabled people in museums and galleries through the [Curating for Change](#) programme
- working with Vocal Eyes to improve digital access and information on cultural sites for blind and visually impaired people

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Defra has progressed work on the King Charles III England Coast Path, with over 850 miles now open to the public. At 2,700 miles, it will be the longest waymarked and maintained coastal walking route in the world. The route will allow people to walk around the whole English coast, linking up the best existing coastal paths and creating new ones.

Proposals for a new National Trail on Wainwright's coast-to-coast route across the north of England have now been approved. This will see the existing 197 mile route upgraded to National Trail Standards. £5.6 million has been committed to upgrade the path and it is expected to open in 2025. The new National Trail from St Bees to Robin Hood's Bay will take walkers across some of the most beautiful parts of the North of England, including through 3 National Parks: the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors.

Both pieces of work are being developed in accordance with the National Trails and [By All Reasonable Means](#) quality standards. This will result in better surfacing, the removal of stiles and more signs to show more accessible alternative routes.

The [Farming in Protected Landscapes](#) programme funds projects which support nature recovery and mitigate the impacts of climate change. It also provides opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage or protect or improve the quality and character of the landscape or place. A range of projects have been funded which will improve accessibility of sites.

The [Preventing and Tackling Mental Ill Health through Green Social Prescribing Programme](#) was established in October 2020 and ran until 31 March 2023. It looked at how to increase use and connection to the natural environment through referral to green (nature-based) and blue (nature-based around water) social prescribing services within communities in England. The programme was designed to improve mental health outcomes, reduce health inequalities, reduce demand on the health and social care system, and develop best practices at a local

level. The programme has been successful, achieving around 8,000 referrals to green social prescribing. It has also gathered a wealth of evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of green and blue social prescribing, and how best to implement it.

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)

DESNZ is helping to improve energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty for low income and other vulnerable households through the ECO4 scheme. ECO4 is a government energy-efficiency scheme valued at £4 billion to tackle fuel poverty and help reduce carbon emissions, which runs from April 2022 to March 2026.

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to a £3.8 billion Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund over a 10-year period to improve the energy performance of social rented homes in England, on the pathway to net zero by 2050. Social housing occupants are more likely to be fuel-poor, disabled, or have a long-term illness, or be from an ethnic minority group than the average household. This means the fund will offer considerable benefit to these groups. So far over £1 billion has been committed for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and associated Demonstrator project.

The Sustainable Warmth Scheme has awarded £500 million in funding to local authorities in England. The funding enables local authorities to help low income households with energy efficiency and heating upgrades, in properties with some of the worst energy efficiency ratings to lower their energy costs and improve health and wellbeing.

The Energy Price Guarantee, Energy Bills Support Scheme, Energy Bill Relief Schemes, Energy Bills Discount Scheme and Alternative Fuel Payment Funds (Domestic and Non-Domestic) were set up to support domestic and non-domestic consumers with the rise in energy prices, to reduce disadvantages caused by the increase. Plans for further targeted support for disabled people is outlined in Chapter 3.

Department for Education (DfE)

DfE published the SEND and AP improvement plan, in response to the Green Paper, in March 2023. The Improvement Plan establishes a single national system, setting out new national SEND and alternative provision standards, that delivers for every child and young person with SEND so that they enjoy their childhood, achieve good outcomes and are well prepared for adulthood and employment.

DfE announced increased high needs funding. This includes:

- an increase that brings local authorities' high needs budgets to over £10 billion in the financial year 2023 to 2024
- £1.5 billion of new capital investment through High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA) to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or who require alternative provision (AP)
- plans to build up to 60 new special and AP free schools

DfE launched the [Universal Services Programme](#) in May 2022, helping the school and further education workforce to identify and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND earlier and more effectively. In 2023, DfE also trained staff in around 150 mainstream schools to use assistive technology. It commissioned an impact evaluation to understand how

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assistive technology training can support wider SEND continuing professional development. DfE is investing £18 million in the Supported Internships Programme. This will support more young people with SEND to prepare for and move into employment.

DfE continues to involve children, young people with SEND, and their parents and carers to improve the quality of policy development and implementation within the SEND system. Their 3-year contracts with the Children's Disabled Council (CDC) and Contact are worth £18.39 million.

DfE also launched the £30 million [Short Breaks Innovation Fund](#). This tested approaches to the delivery of short breaks for children and young people with SEND. Year 1 of the 3 year programme started in April 2023, with funding for 7 local authority projects totalling £4.35 million.

Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

DHSC supported the Down Syndrome Private Members Bill, which became an Act in April 2022. DHSC also published the first and second [Rare Diseases Action Plan](#), which sets out specific actions to improve the lives of people living with rare diseases, including those with a physical or learning disability. Provision of support will now be based on an assessment of need, removing barriers associated with disease or diagnostic status.

The Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund continues to incentivise the supply of supported housing for older people and adults with a physical or learning disability, autism, or mental ill-health.

DHSC published the [Building the Right Support Action Plan](#), which aims to reduce the number of autistic people and people with a learning disability in mental health hospitals. It also carried out Independent Care (Education) and Treatment Reviews for people with a learning disability and autistic people in long-term segregation in a mental health inpatient setting, to help move people in the most restrictive settings towards discharge.

The Health and Care Act 2022 introduced a requirement that all Care Quality Commission registered service providers ensure their staff receive learning disability and autism training appropriate to their role. To support this, DHSC has begun [Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training](#) on autism and learning disabilities.

The draft bill to reform the Mental Health Act was published in June 2022. The reforms will give people more of a say in their care and treatment, access to increased support from independent advocates, and address the racial disparities in the application of the Act. DHSC also ran a call for evidence on what can be done to support mental health, wellbeing and suicide prevention. The responses will influence the development of the Major Conditions Strategy, announced in January 2023.

NHS England (an executive non-departmental public body of DHSC) has taken steps to improve care for people with a learning disability and autistic people. These include:

- publishing updated [Dynamic Support Register and Care \(Education\) and Treatment Review](#) guidance to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions for people with a learning disability and autistic people
- publishing a national framework for assessing autism

- conducting reviews of deaths of autistic people in the Learning from the Lives and Deaths of people with a learning disability and autistic people ([LeDeR - Learning Disabilities Mortality Review](#)) programme
- publishing the third national collection of data on NHS trusts' performance against the 4 learning disability improvement standards
- delivering annual health checks and health action plans for people with a learning disability, and piloting a new health check for autistic people
- producing educational and video resources to support appropriate use of antipsychotic medicines for people with a learning disability

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

DLUHC set out a proposal to mandate the M4(2) higher accessibility requirement in Building Regulations as a minimum standard for all new homes. Updated [How to Let and How to Rent](#) guides were published in March 2023, including new information for landlords and tenants on adaptations.

DLUHC also made the new model of shared ownership available to disabled people buying a home under the Home Ownership for People with Long-Term Disabilities (HOLD) scheme. Homes sold through this scheme will have a minimum lease term of 125 years to ensure that applicants have the widest possible choice of homes for purchase, with the expectation that 990-year leases should be offered where possible.

In February 2023, DLUHC announced the outcome of the second round of Changing Places Funding. This included funding of around £7.4 million to be shared across 64 local authorities, which will assist in developing 120 new Changing Places Toilets.

DLUHC also funded the Local Government Association to run a programme to increase the representation of disabled people in local politics. This includes:

- a campaign to attract more disabled candidates
- a disabled councillors leadership programme
- one-to-one coaching for disabled councillors

DLUHC has brought forward improvements in the support given to disabled voters at polling stations through the Elections Act. This came into effect at the local elections in May 2023.

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)

DSIT introduced the Online Safety Bill, which is currently progressing through parliament. This will introduce vital new protections to improve the online experience for disabled users. All companies likely to be accessed by children will need to specifically consider children with 'a certain characteristic or members of a certain group'. This includes disabled children. In practice, this means companies will need to:

- conduct regular risk assessments
- take proactive, preventative measures to tackle priority illegal offences that could affect children
- protect children from harmful content and activity, such as legal self-harm content and online bullying

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Companies will also need to make it easier for children and their parents to report harmful content and respond quickly and effectively.

The £30 million Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Science Conversion Course programme was established to address the lack of diversity and supply of talent in the UK AI labour market. It has funded universities to develop master's level AI or data science courses suitable for non-STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) students, and up to 3,000 scholarships for students from backgrounds underrepresented in the tech industry. The programme is already having a positive impact, increasing diversity and successfully converting non-STEM students to enter the AI labour market. To date, 26% of scholarships have been awarded to disabled students.

Department for Transport (DfT)

DfT continues to make good progress on the commitments in the Inclusive Transport Strategy (2018), with the majority completed.

The Aviation Passenger Charter, a single point of information for consumers on their rights and responsibilities at each stage of their journey, was published in July 2022. It includes sections on the rights of disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility. Following a consultation on Aviation Consumer Policy Reform in January 2022, the DfT have committed to a range of both legislative reforms and non-legislative measures to ensure passengers have the right protections in place and receive the best possible service. These include:

- Legislating when parliamentary time allows to:
 - Provide additional powers to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to enforce consumer rights (including fines)
 - Mandating membership to an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) body for all airlines operating to, from and within the UK
 - Removing the compensation cap for damage of wheelchairs and mobility aids on domestic UK flights
- We will be working with industry to encourage voluntary uptake of these measures ahead of legislating.
- In addition the DfT, working with the Disability and Access Ambassador for Airports, published a new training module on handling powered wheelchairs and the impact of damage on the passengers.

To improve the accessibility of rail, DfT has made improvements, including:

- ensuring that all heavy rail passenger rolling stock is now compliant with accessibility standards
- supporting the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) to develop an online model of stations to enable passengers to familiarise themselves with the layout and environment before they travel
- making Passenger Assistance booking easier through a RDG app, and reducing the booking window from 6 hours to 2 hours
- completing an accessibility audit of all stations in Great Britain, which DfT expects to make publicly available in 2024

DfT has relaunched the Inclusive Transport Leaders Scheme, which aims to incentivise transport operators to make accessibility improvements to their services. DfT also supported the passage of the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022. This introduced measures to help disabled people to travel by taxi and private hire vehicle with the confidence that they would not be discriminated against.

DfT introduced the Public Service Vehicles (Accessible Information) Regulations (AIR) in May 2023. This requires audible and visible route, location and diversion information on local bus and coach services across Great Britain. The requirements will begin to apply from October 2024, with most services expected to be up to date by October 2026.

DfT also announced £4.65 million in funding to support smaller operators of local bus and coach services to provide audible and visible information.

DfT gave £450,000 more in funding to Muscular Dystrophy UK for accessible toilets. This will be used to extend the Changing Places Toilets scheme beyond motorway service areas.

DfT has made over 100 updates to the Blue Badge digital service since 2019. These aim to make the online application process as easy as possible. DfT has now introduced a new facility to allow Civil Enforcement Officers to check the validity of Blue Badges at the roadside, to help local authorities deal with fraud and misuse.

DfT and disability charity Motability co-sponsored the publication of [PAS \(Publicly Available Standard\) 1899](#) to meet the need for standardised guidance on accessible electric vehicle public charging points.

DfT ran its latest activity on the [it's everyone's journey](#) campaign for 6 weeks from September 2022. The campaign aims to build disabled people's confidence to travel by creating a more considerate and supportive environment.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

DWP published [Transforming Support: The Health and Disability White Paper](#) in March 2023. This sets out how DWP will:

- support more disabled people to start, stay and succeed in work
- improve people's overall experience of the benefits system

To support people nearing the end of their lives, DWP made changes which mean that people with less than 12 months to live can now use special rules to claim:

- Universal Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Disability Living Allowance
- Attendance Allowance

This follows an evaluation where DWP heard from clinicians, stakeholders and people nearing the end of life. Before this change, people could only use the special rules if they had 6 months or less to live.

DWP also reduced the average new end-to-end Personal Independent Payment (PIP) customer journey to 14 weeks in January 2023, compared with 26 weeks in August 2021.

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They have launched new policies to support disabled people to start, stay and succeed in work, including:

- a new information and advice service
- working with DHSC to increase the number of employment advisers in NHS talking therapies services in England
- a local supported employment programme helping people with learning disabilities and/or autism to find and stay in work
- a joint fund with DHSC for new ideas to boost health and welfare at work for small and medium-sized enterprises and self-employed people
- extra work coach support for people claiming Universal Credit and Employment Support Allowance - this is already live in two-thirds of Jobcentres and will be available nationally by 2024

To help with the increased cost of living, DWP successfully delivered 6 million [Disability Cost of Living Payments](#) of £150 each to disabled people receiving certain benefits. It will make another round of payments in summer 2023.

DWP, working with DHSC, has announced a number of schemes designed to help disabled people start, stay and succeed in work. Through Spring Budget 23, they have secured investment to support commitments including:

- Universal Support: to introduce a new supported employment programme which will support economically inactive disabled people and people with long-term health conditions in England and Wales and with additional barriers, into sustained work
- additional Work Coach time: expanding an existing programme in Great Britain that provides increased one-to-one personalised Work Coach support to help claimants of Employment and Support Allowance and the health component of Universal Credit to move towards, and into, work
- WorkWell Partnerships Programme: piloting integrated work and health support for disabled people and people with health conditions who want help to remain in, return to or take up work
- Vocational Support in Musculoskeletal Conditions (MSK) service pathways: introducing employment advisors in MSK service pathways in England, helping individuals with MSK conditions to return to or remain in employment
- occupational health (OH): expanding the funding for the forthcoming subsidy pilot for OH services and launching a consultation in conjunction with the Department for Business and Trade on increasing uptake of OH

The [Health Adjustment Passport](#) was rolled out in May 2022, after a successful trial across the Jobcentre Plus network in 2021. This helps disabled jobseekers and raises awareness of Access to Work. In the financial year 2022 to 2023, applications to the Access to Work scheme went up significantly, and DWP has responded to that increase, reducing all waiting times and improving processes.

In addition, an [Adjustment Passport pilot](#) supporting disabled young people to transition from education programmes into work started in February 2023.

DWP is working with DHSC to deliver the Mental Health Productivity Pilot (MHPP), which has been running since 2019 to improve and support the mental health of employees. Over 800 businesses with an approximate reach of up to 650,000 employees have been involved.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

FCDO launched the [FCDO Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy](#), setting out the UK's approach to disability inclusion internationally until 2030. The strategy notes the importance of building the capacity of disabled people's organisations (DPOs). The FCDO has also published internal guidance for its staff consulting with DPOs on FCDO diplomacy and programmes.

FCDO also published the [International Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2030](#), which includes action for disabled women and girls. As part of this, FCDO aims to put women and girls at the heart of everything they do.

FCDO will ensure that the implementation of the strategy is inclusive and intersectional, reinforcing the priorities of the Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy. They will continue to support sexual and reproductive health rights, particularly for the most marginalised groups, including disabled people.

HM Treasury (HMT)

HMT collaborates with other departments to support delivery of disability policies, including sources of financial support to alleviate cost of living pressures on disabled people. At Spring Budget 2023, the government announced a suite of policies aimed at supporting people with long term health conditions to access the services they need, effectively manage their conditions and feel supported to return to, or remain in, employment. This included a HMT-led consultation on tax incentives for occupational health.

Home Office (HO)

Border Force, part of the Home Office, undertook a number of initiatives to improve the travelling experience of disabled passengers, including launching its support for the Hidden Disability Sunflower Scheme, at ports and airports around the UK. Border Force has also ensured that accessibility needs are key requirements in the latest tendering exercise for its replacement e-Passport Gates.

HO's Police Uplift Programme used radio, TV advertising, social media and digital tools to tell the stories of different police officers, including neurodiverse officers. This has helped forces recruit a more diverse police force – data to 31 March shows that out of almost 60% of police officers who shared their disability status, 8.7% identified as having a disability.

HO also reviewed and revised their commercial arrangements for BSL. This led to a new commercial contract with a specialist BSL provider that ensures a simpler process for accessing services when engaging with the d/Deaf and hard of hearing community and for HO employees who are d/Deaf and hard of hearing to access BSL and other services.

Ministry of Defence (MOD)

MOD is committed to becoming a more modern and inclusive employer. In 2021, they announced a Cyber Pathfinder scheme to increase inclusion in defence. This is now open, and trains and assesses military personnel joining the National Cyber Force.

In April 2022, MOD took over running Access to Work for people working in the MOD. This change to disability and health-related policies in MOD is to make sure disabled people have a more positive experience of working in defence.

MOD also recognises that HIV can now be easily managed to ensure the safety of people with HIV and their colleagues. In June 2022, MOD removed the barrier to entry to the armed forces for people who are HIV positive and taking pre-exposure prophylaxis medication to prevent HIV infection.

People already serving in the armed forces who are diagnosed with HIV will continue to be supported in accessing treatment.

Ministry of Justice (MOJ)

MOJ has amended the law to allow d/Deaf people needing a BSL interpreter to serve on jury. They have also invested over £1 million to recruit more diverse magistrates in England and Wales, including more disabled magistrates. Their [6-month update on the Neurodiversity Action Plan](#) shows improved support for neurodiverse people including:

- neurodiversity specialist services in 4 probation regions
- the rollout of the Neurodiversity Support Manager role in prisons

HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) is an executive agency of MOJ. They have supported digitally-excluded users of courts and tribunals, including people with disabilities, to access online services through a partnership with We Are Digital.

Chapter 3: Government plans for 2023 and 2024

In Chapter 2 we set out what the government has delivered in the last 12 months to improve the lives of disabled people. But there is always more we can do.

In this chapter we outline some of our plans across each government department in the next 18 months and beyond to improve disabled people's lives and enable them to achieve their full potential.

Proposals for new cross-government work led or coordinated by the Disability Unit are covered in more detail in Chapter 4.

Cabinet Office

Cabinet Office will build on the experiences of GOV.UK One Login's early users to inform how the Government Digital Service (GDS) can further improve accessibility. For example, GOV.UK One Login will in future broaden the range of options that can be used to help users prove their identity, and expand the choice of account authentication methods. These changes will make it easier for disabled users to access One Login.

GDS is committed to meeting the Government Accessibility Requirements and other best practice, including:

- ensuring that the system complies with the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 levels A and AA
- publishing an up-to-date statement outlining how the service meets accessibility regulations
- regularly auditing the service to check that it meets accessibility requirements and to identify any outstanding challenges
- conducting accessibility testing when building and releasing new features
- involving disabled people in user research

Additional services and functionality will be added, including assisted digital capability through a call centre. Offline identity verification routes will also be available for people who do not have access to the internet, including over-the-counter checks at the Post Office.

The Cabinet Office will also continue to work with under-represented groups, including disabled people, to encourage them to apply for public appointments.

Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA)

OVA has commissioned a number of projects that will support research and trials to help veterans with health conditions, including disabled veterans. Through the £5 million Veterans' Health Innovation Fund, OVA has funded research projects into mobility equipment, prosthetics, and rehabilitation. While the focus of these projects is on veterans, government hopes that research will benefit the wider population too. The outcomes of these projects are expected in 2024 and 2025 and may help inform future policy.

OVA is planning to publish the first Women Veterans' Strategy later. This will set out how the government will support women veterans across a range of issues, including mental health, employment and accessibility.

Department for Business and Trade (DBT)

DBT plans to publish 2 Export Promotion Brochures on Assistive Technology and Inclusive Design for the Built Environment. The brochures will promote UK businesses internationally through a series of illustrative case studies, highlighting world-leading UK supply-side expertise in the areas of assistive technology and inclusive design. The aim is to increase UK exports, support job creation, and grow the UK's domestic disability-related industries, helping to improve disabled people's lives.

DBT provides an extensive range of business support to all entrepreneurs to ensure the UK is the best place to start and grow a business. Existing support includes our network of Growth Hubs across England, the Business Support Helpline and various funding programmes from the British Business Bank. DBT also engages with disabled entrepreneurs and disability-led businesses to understand the specific barriers they face. These include extra costs to manage their condition, such as supportive equipment and heating costs.

DBT is committed to introducing one week of unpaid leave for unpaid carers. Following a consultation, the government is introducing Carer's Leave as a 'day one' right for employees.

The government supported the Carer's Leave Act. This new employment right will provide eligible employees with up to 1 week of unpaid leave during any 12 months, available to take flexibly in individual or half days. The entitlement to Carer's Leave would form the minimum entitlement. It would be at employers' discretion to enhance the entitlement in length or offer pay, as a number already do.

DBT will continue to work with disability representative organisations on the right to request flexible working, as the planned legislative changes come into effect in 2024. As part of this, we will update employer and employee guidance on flexible working, as well as the ACAS Code of Practice on handling flexible working requests.

DBT will work with the Flexible Working Taskforce - of which disability charity Scope is a member - to review and update guidance on flexible working and the planned call for evidence.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

DCMS is supporting Arts Councils across the UK who are working with the British Film Institute to launch a free, UK-wide arts access scheme by early 2024. This will provide ways of booking that are responsive to people's individual circumstances and needs across all arts and cultural venues.

In addition, DCMS will continue to encourage more autism-friendly programmes in the cultural and heritage sectors. Work will continue with the Arts and Culture Disability and Access Ambassador to improve accessibility to the sector for disabled people.

DCMS will fulfil its ambition for the UK to become the most accessible tourist destination in Europe by 2025. This work will focus on existing best practices and toolkits, such as the National Accessible Scheme. It will also examine how people are currently limited in their access to tourism services based on their protected characteristics.

DCMS will continue to work with:

- VisitBritain, VisitEngland and other stakeholders in the tourism sector to promote the importance of accessible tourism in the media and to businesses
- the England Inclusive Tourism Action Group on the next steps following the National Accessible Scheme review, which has historically rated tourist accommodation based on its suitability for guests with accessibility requirements

DCMS plans to launch a new sports strategy in summer 2023, alongside a revised version of the Gold Framework (the joint UK Sport and DCMS guidance on the bidding and hosting major events). These will support ambitions to make the sector more inclusive and help underrepresented groups, including disabled people, to get physically active, as well as ensuring a balance of men's, women's and para events.

DCMS will also continue to provide support for the hosting of major events featuring disability sport.

This includes investing in Paralympic sport through UK Sport, including £67 million for the 2024 Paris Paralympics - an increase of more than £13 million from 2021 Tokyo Paralympics.

DCMS will also build on the success of events like the Rugby League World Cup, which had the men's, women's and wheelchair tournaments played concurrently for the first time ever.

Sport England will launch the next phase of the Moving Social Work Programme to enable social workers to promote physical activity to disabled people. To date, this has been provided to 307 social work students and 110 practising social workers.

Department for the Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Defra announced £14.5 million in funding for its 'Access for All' programme in the [Environmental Improvement Plan](#). This aims to make access to green and blue spaces more inclusive and includes:

- £7.76 million for improvements to accessibility infrastructure in 10 national parks and 34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- £3.1 million for access improvements on the Forestry England estate, particularly in areas of high deprivation and near diverse urban populations
- £2.13 million for Natural England to review Defra's current maps of open access land
- £1.5 million for Natural England as extra funding for National Trails

Defra will continue to work on the King Charles III England Coast Path and extension and provide further funding for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme until March 2025.

Department for Education (DfE)

33 new special free schools will be built in addition to the 48 already planned. These come with a £2.6 billion investment between 2022 and 2025 to increase special school and alternative provision capacity. DfE is also expanding workforce training to cover a wide range of educational needs, from up to 5,000 early years special educational needs co-ordinators to a further 400 educational psychologists. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education is developing an apprenticeship for teachers of children with sensory impairments.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) Improvement Plan forms part of the government's significant investment into children and young people with SEND, and alternative provision. Investment is going up by more than 50% compared with 2019 to 2020, to over £10 billion by 2023 to 2024. The SEND and AP Improvement Plan sets out DfE's mission for more children and young people to have their needs met effectively in mainstream settings. This will reduce reliance on education, health and care (EHC) plans to access support.

DfE is committed to improving mainstream education through setting national standards. The standards will help families, practitioners and providers understand what support every child or young person should be receiving from early years through to further education, no matter where they live or what their needs are.

By the end of 2025, DfE will publish a significant proportion of the National Standards. They will also develop new practice guides to better meet individuals' needs. DfE will start by building on existing best practice – including on early language support, autism and mental health and wellbeing – and will publish 3 new guides in 2025. The guides will help provide the right support in line with the national standards, using examples to demonstrate how to adapt these to each child's unique experience.

DfE will cut local bureaucracy by making sure the process for assessing children and young people's needs through EHC plans is digital-first, quicker and simpler wherever possible.

Additional measures to help disabled children and young people and their families in the Improvement Plan include:

- creating a new leadership level Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) National Professional Qualification (NPQ), ensuring consistent high quality training for SENCos
- extending the Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforces, working directly with young people to offer intensive, expert support, including mental health professionals, family workers, and speech and language therapists, backed by an additional £6 million investment
- improving the Disabled Students' Allowance process, working with the Student Loans Company to reduce the waiting time for support to be agreed
- investing £18 million into the Supported Internship programme, aiming to double the number of supported internship places by 2025, from around 2,500 to around 5,000
- continuing to support the Department for Work and Pensions' Adjustments Passport pilot to smooth the transition into employment

A new National SEND and Alternative Provision Implementation Board made up from parents, sector leaders in education, health, care and local and national government, and jointly chaired by Education and Health Ministers will oversee this reform.

The Support for Families with Disabled Children (SFDC) Fund provides £27.3 million per year to deliver grants and support to low-income families raising disabled or seriously ill children and young people. These grants are for items and services not provided by the statutory system to improve the family's quality of life and ease their additional daily pressures, such as devices to support home learning, or household goods to meet medical needs.

DfE is currently trialling a new electronic neurodiversity profiling tool which helps schools identify children with autism and other neurodiverse conditions early. Early identification allows earlier provision of proven support mechanisms.

As set out in the [National Plan for Music Education](#) (2022), DfE wants every child to be able to participate in a high-quality music education. DfE will set up a Centre of Excellence in late 2024 to support the Music Hubs network in widening participation, including for pupils with SEND. DfE has also committed £25 million extra funding for musical instruments in this Spending Review period, including for adapted instruments.

DfE has developed children's social care and SEND and AP reforms in parallel. This is to ensure the 2 systems align, and will provide high quality support for disabled children and their families. Over the next 2 years, DfE will deliver the following commitments for disabled children:

- a Law Commission review of children's social care legislation for disabled children
- non-stigmatising and easier access to family help
- a stronger focus on disabled children in the [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) statutory guidance
- new metrics that track the experiences of disabled children through the system

Over the next 2 years, DfE will develop the Families First for Children Pathfinders scheme. Central to this will be developing a supportive, non-stigmatising service tailored to meet the needs of children and families, including disabled children. Working closely with pathfinder local authorities, DfE will develop and test different disability inclusive approaches, including encouraging more flexible, tailored approaches to assessment for disabled children.

DfE has announced that students will be able to study British Sign Language (BSL) as a GCSE from September 2025. The curriculum will include students being taught to communicate effectively with other signers for use in work, social and academic settings, providing them with valuable life skills valued by employers. The content has been designed so that students with no prior knowledge of sign language can study the GCSE, while continuing to challenge students who use sign language as their first language, making this GCSE accessible for all.

DfE has been working closely with subject experts, stakeholders and schools to develop proposed content to ensure that this new GCSE is internationally recognised and accepted in school and college performance tables. In line with our expectations for all qualifications, the GCSE will be knowledge rich, diverse and as challenging as any other GCSE. The government is currently carrying out a 12 week consultation on the content of the new qualification.

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)

In March 2023, DESNZ confirmed plans for the Great British Insulation Scheme. This is in addition to ECO4, a government energy efficiency scheme designed to tackle fuel poverty and help reduce carbon emissions. ECO4 obligates energy companies to deliver energy efficiency measures to domestic premises.

Between April 2023 and March 2026, the Great British Insulation Scheme will extend help to a broader range of households in the least efficient homes in the lower council tax bands.

At least 20% of the scheme will focus on low-income households, targeting those on means-tested benefits, living in the least efficient social housing, or referred by a participating local authority or energy supplier and considered on a low-income or vulnerable. We know that there is a greater prevalence of disabled people within these households, compared to the wider population. As with ECO4, the scheme includes a Flex element for people with severe and/or long-term health conditions who could be seriously impacted by the effects of living in a cold home but may not be reached based on other scheme criteria. Under the Great British Insulation Scheme this can bring additional support.

From July 2023, the Energy Price Guarantee will be used to remove the higher cost paid by prepayment customers compared to direct debit customers. People with a long-term disability or illness in the household are disproportionately represented among prepayment consumers.

DESNZ is reviewing the approach to prioritising electricity supplies during an electricity supply emergency. This is known as the Electricity Supply Emergency Code.

The review will develop a policy for distributing electricity during an emergency, while limiting disruption to essential services and critical sites. It is due to be completed by September 2023, though its recommendations will be put in place over a longer timescale.

This review is not directly related to disability policy and the main objective of electricity industry emergency measures is maintaining system stability. Disabled people are likely to benefit indirectly from the implementation of the review recommendations where this better mitigates secondary impacts of power loss for the public by keeping relevant critical services supplied. The review outcomes will not impact the ability of disabled people to join the Priority Services Register, which enables vulnerable people to access additional support from their gas and electricity suppliers and network operators.

The joint government and Ofgem [Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan 2021](#) committed to helping consumers who would otherwise struggle to use smart energy. DESNZ has used the findings of Project InvolVe, which identified how innovation may help enable low income and vulnerable consumers, to develop more initiatives.

In February 2023, DESNZ launched the [Inclusive Smart Solutions Innovation Competition](#), which is part of the [Net Zero Innovation Portfolio](#). The competition, worth up to £2.75 million, aims to improve access to, purchase and use of smart energy technologies, products and services among low income and vulnerable consumers.

As set out in the Autumn Statement 2023, DESNZ is working with consumer groups and industry to explore the best approach to consumer protection from April 2024, as part of wider retail market reforms. They intend to consult in summer 2023 on this new approach.

DESNZ will continue to discuss energy support needs with stakeholders, including organisations representing disabled people. These discussions will consider how best to support disabled people and families with disabled children, including those with medical equipment in the home, with their energy costs.

Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

DHSC knows that effective health and social care services are essential to enable disabled people to live independent and fulfilling lives. In April 2023, they published [Next steps to put People at the Heart of Care](#), which announced plans to invest up to £700 million over the next 2 years to improve the social care system, building on the £100 million already invested in the past year.

The social care workforce remains at the heart of these plans. DHSC is investing £250 million over the next 2 years to:

- launch a new Care Workforce Pathway for adult social care to support the development and provide a career structure
- provide funding for hundreds of thousands of training places which will include courses on learning disabilities and autism, dementia care, leadership, and health care interventions to support delegation
- introduce a new Care Certificate qualification that will, over time, become the new baseline standard for all new care workers

DHSC is investing more than £0.5 billion a year in the well-established Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). This allows people in England to apply to their local authority to help pay for the cost of home adaptations that will:

- help them live safely, independently and healthily for longer
- reduce their need for care and support

DHSC is also providing £102 million over 2 years for smaller adaptations, minor repairs and practical advice for local areas to complement the DFG. This will help people return home more quickly and remain there, following, for example, a stay in hospital.

DHSC is also continuing to subsidise a new supply of specialised housing for older and disabled people through the Care and Support Specialised Housing (CASSH) Fund.

In addition, DHSC and its agencies and partners will also:

- produce Down Syndrome Act statutory guidance which aims to improve access to services, health, social care, education and housing, to improve the quality of life for people with Down Syndrome
- update the Statutory Guidance on Autism to support the NHS and Local Authorities to deliver improved outcomes for autistic people
- continue to support the NHS Long Term Plan commitment to a 50% net reduction in the number of people with a learning disability and autistic people in specialist inpatient settings by March 2024 (compared with March 2015)
- develop a statutory Code of Practice for Care Quality Commission-registered providers to ensure their staff receive appropriate learning disability and autism training

- continue to support the rollout of the [Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism](#) to the health and social care workforce
- set out plans to meet the aims of the [Major Conditions Strategy](#) announced in January 2023 that sets out a shift to integrated, whole-person care
- work with NHS England and the Care Quality Commission to improve the quality and coverage of mental health and learning disability services data – the Mental Health Services Dataset captures data on all children, young people and adults in contact with services for mental health and wellbeing, learning disabilities, autism or other neurodevelopmental conditions
- continue work on Mental Health Act reforms, including giving people greater control over their treatment and for the first time being able to choose the person they want to represent their interests – it will also improve the way people with a learning disability and autistic people are treated in law
- continue to work to implement the [UK Rare Diseases Framework](#), upholding the commitment to publish action plans for England annually throughout the lifetime of the framework – progress made over the year ahead to improve the lives of people living with rare diseases will be included in England's 2024 Rare Diseases Action Plan

NHS England will:

- review and update the Accessible Information Standard to improve the way people's communication needs are met
- develop a 'digital flag' for reasonable adjustments in patient health records to ensure that NHS staff can tailor support to people's specific needs - the digital flag will identify that a person has a learning disability or is autistic and the reasonable adjustments they need to support their experience of care
- publish the Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Inpatient Services Framework

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

Living in a safe and accessible home is an important and essential part of disabled people leading a fulfilling life.

DLUHC will:

- consult further on technical changes needed to mandate the higher M4(2) accessibility standard, changes to statutory guidance, and how exceptions will apply
- publish research on the prevalence and demographics of impairment in England and ergonomic requirements and experiences of disabled people, and consider what updates are needed to statutory guidance in Approved Document M
- develop new guidance on community engagement in planning to help local authorities and other users better engage with their communities
- reform the process for producing plans so that it is simpler, faster and easier for communities to engage with - this includes digital engagement to remove barriers to engagement and create a more democratic planning system, with planning decisions and local plans informed by a larger and more diverse range of community views

- carry out further research into fire safety in specialised housing and care homes, - separate research into means of escape for disabled people is being finalised
- continue supporting 25 design code pathfinders with the Office for Place to set standards for design locally, exploring design considerations such as built form, housing densities, accessible streets and access to green and play spaces within their draft local design codes
- work with the National Trading Standards Estate and Letting Agents Team to voluntarily add accessibility categories to material listings for properties being let or sold on the private market

DLUHC and DWP have also commissioned research to assess the size, cost and demand of the supported housing sector. The research findings are expected to be published by the end of 2023. This is vital to ensuring that:

- the government has the best available data for making decisions on the future direction of supported housing policy
- residents in supported housing receive good quality support and accommodation which represents value for money

The government is supporting the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill which is currently progressing through Parliament. The bill includes a requirement for local authorities to publish local supported housing strategies, including an assessment of existing availability and the likely future need for supported housing. This must include specialist supported housing for people with a physical disability, mental health condition, learning disability or autistic people. The strategies will be renewed every 5 years.

The government recognises that it is not only important for disabled people to have an accessible home, but that other buildings need to be accessible and safe to use too. DLUHC believes there is scope to update building regulations guidance to improve accessibility and inclusive design for buildings other than dwellings, subject to consultation. They will consider how to use research evidence in an update to statutory guidance. For example they have:

- commissioned a full review of Part M of the Building Regulations, relating to access to and use of buildings - this includes a research programme on the prevalence and demographics of impairment in England and ergonomic requirements and experiences of disabled people
- provided guidance for councils on options they should consider, such as housing with improved accessibility, to enable older and disabled people to live more safely and independently - building on existing planning rules that meant that councils must consider the needs of older and disabled people when planning new homes

The Accessibility of Elections Working Group brings together representatives from civil society organisations and charities representing disabled people, as well as organisations from the elections sector across the UK, to support disabled people to take part in the electoral process. This group is considering how best to encourage innovation, remove barriers, and improve accessibility for disabled voters. Proposals to improve support for disabled people to stand for elected office in parliamentary elections are set out in Chapter 4.

DLUHC is currently finalising the contents of the 2023 to 2024 sector support programme with the Local Government Association which will consider support to councillors and prospective candidates for locally elected office.

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)

As part of the government's Online Media Literacy Strategy, DSIT is supporting disabled users with over £1 million in funding for new media literacy projects, including those supporting disabled users of all ages through to March 2024. This is in addition to the £250,000 in funding to help providers of media literacy initiatives adapt their programmes to better suit children with SEND, which was completed in 2022.

Department for Transport (DfT)

DfT continues to make transport more accessible, including through the priorities set out in the [2018 Inclusive Transport Strategy](#).

The 2021 [Plan for Rail](#) announced a National Rail Accessibility Strategy, a significant change in rail network accessibility for disabled passengers and those with accessibility needs. The [Great British Railways Transition Team](#) (GBRTT) is developing the strategy.

DfT, with Network Rail, is assessing over 300 nominations to make stations more accessible. More Access for All funding is expected to be available beyond 2024, and DfT expects to announce successful projects later this year.

A National Accessibility Audit, split into 2 main phases, will assess and audit all UK rail stations. The first phase, the physical auditing of all 2,572 stations, is complete. The second phase will be to develop a way to present the data collected by the audit to the public, so people have more detailed information to plan their journeys better.

A public consultation will be launched in 2023 to understand the impact of existing accessibility standards, as mandated through the Code of Practice (Design Standards for Accessible Railway stations). The consultation will help determine what more needs to be done to improve rail accessibility for all users on mainline railway stations in Great Britain.

Design standards for stations will be updated in collaboration with an expert working group, including community rail partners, to bring new ideas and best practices to the standards. This will include setting out how to make stations more accessible and inclusive and how to integrate standards more effectively with wider developments and transport services.

DfT will complete the Disabled Persons Railcard (DPRC) review, which was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

DfT has consulted on revised best practice guidance for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing authorities in England, including a strengthened recommendation on drivers completing disability awareness training. DfT will publish the final version in due course.

DfT aims to consult on regulatory measures to empower bus drivers to give access to on-board priority spaces, including the statutory wheelchair space, when asked by a disabled passenger.

DfT intends to update notices of exemption displayed in vehicles by taxi and private hire vehicle drivers exempt from performing particular duties - clarifying who is exempt and what they are exempt from.

DfT is undertaking bus and coach user research to better understand how disabled people and people with other protected characteristics use buses, coaches and the roadside facilities supporting them, such as bus stations and stops. The findings from this research will inform future work on bus and coach accessibility regulation.

The current Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR) set the minimum accessibility requirements for vehicles such as buses and coaches seating 22 or more passengers used on local or scheduled routes. DfT is currently undertaking a review of the PSVAR, which will include a Call for Evidence planned to be launched in June 2023. The review will consider the changing needs and expectations of disabled users of buses and coaches, and what changes might be needed so that the PSVAR remains effective.

DfT remains committed to legislating, when parliamentary time allows, to make it mandatory for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers to complete disability awareness training.

DfT is exploring how it might integrate the Blue Badge Digital Service with DWP disability benefit systems, to allow faster and more accurate approval of Blue Badge applications based on DWP benefit awards.

In Aviation, DfT will:

- work alongside the Disability and Access Ambassador for airports to develop training for ground handling staff on the handling of powered wheelchairs, to be included in the 'Real Passenger - Real Person' training package, which is designed to help make travel inclusive and accessible for everyone using passenger transport
- publish the government response to the Aviation Consumer Policy reform consultation, including next steps on accessibility proposals
- review the Aviation Passenger Charter to consider whether it can be made more effective, including for disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility

Active Travel England will establish advisory groups with disabled people for its inspection, investment and planning programmes. They will also work to improve design quality, which in turn will improve accessibility, by conducting training, design reviews, providing advice and inspections and using tools which are driven by the principles of inclusive mobility.

The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) will continue to work with industry and other parties to:

- ensure the effective implementation of Publicly Available Standard (PAS) 1899 for accessible public electric vehicle charging
- inform the 2-year review of the standard, which will be led by the British Standards Institution (BSI)

DfT will continue to promote accessibility on public transport through activities such as the successful 'it's everyone's journey' communications campaign in collaboration with partners in the transport and disability sectors.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

In '[Transforming Support: The Health and Disability White Paper](#)', DWP sets out how it will:

- reform the benefits system for the future so it focuses on what people can do, rather than on what they cannot
- support more disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work
- ensure people can access the right support at the right time and have a better overall experience when applying for and receiving health and disability benefits

The proposals to reform the benefits system for the future will ensure that people who are able to can progress into or towards work without the worry of being reassessed and losing their benefits.

This will require changes to legislation which DWP aims to take forward in a new Parliament.

DWP is also testing new initiatives to make it easier to apply for and receive health and disability benefits and improve support, including:

- employment and health discussions, which are led by a healthcare professional and focus on how to help people to overcome their barriers to work
- the Enhanced Support Service, which will identify people who are most in need of additional help to navigate the benefits system and give them tailored support
- the Severe Disability Group for people with the most severe health conditions, so they do not need to complete a detailed application form or go through an assessment

DWP's focus remains to drive the government's disability agenda by delivering the ambitious, wide ranging package of measures funded over the Spending Review that support disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work. This includes:

- additional Work Coach support offering increased one-to-one personalised support from a Work Coach – this is already available in two-thirds of Jobcentres and will be available nationally by 2024
- expanding Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care to 6 areas, delivering support that integrates with an individual's normal health treatment that encourages the recognition of employment as a driver of health and wellbeing for 12,400 people across 30 local authorities in England
- referrals to the Work and Health Programme have been extended to September 2024 – this provides additional personalised support for finding and moving into work to around 100,000 people, most of whom are disabled people
- expanding Intensive Personalised Employment Support so that up to 11,000 disabled people with complex needs or barriers who want to work will be supported on the programme by December 2023
- the Employment Advisers in NHS Talking Therapies programme will increase to 100% coverage across England by March 2025, investing £122 million by March 2025 to recruit over 700 more employment advisers
- Local Supported Employment to help around 2,000 adults with learning disabilities, autism, or both, to move into and stay in work through intensive one-to-one support, with £7.3 million funding in 28 local authorities in England and Wales until March 2025
- measures to address the increase in Access to Work applications alongside service improvements to simplify and streamline processes – DWP is exploring future reforms to Access to Work which aim to deliver a modern, efficient, digital service and improve the support offer for disabled people to enter and remain in work
- national information and advice service for employers will provide tailored, online guidance to help with conversations about health and disability in the workplace – this service is currently being tested and will continue to add features and content based on user feedback (for example, linking to the guidance, videos and best practice within the Disability Confident scheme that supports employers through the 3 levels)

- the Mental Health and Productivity Pilot (MHPP) will continue to support employers across the Midlands Engine region following a £3 million investment for an 18-month extension – it gives employers resources to support their employees’ mental health and wellbeing, to prevent sickness absences and to promote productivity
- DWP will continue to work with the occupational health (OH) sector to identify ways to expand support for small and medium-sized enterprises and self-employed people to purchase OH services, and stimulate innovation in the OH market through a £1 million fund for innovation

As part of the Spring Budget commitments, we will commence development of new and innovative health and disability employment measures funded at Spring Budget in the context of workforce participation and record levels of long-term sickness. This includes:

- from autumn 2024, the WorkWell Partnership Programme will bring together Jobcentres, the NHS, local authorities, and other partners in a pilot to provide light touch work and health support for disabled people and people with health conditions who want help to remain in, return to or take up work – 2023 to 2024 will be a foundation year for the WorkWell Partnerships Programme to select vanguard sites where delivery will be tested
- Universal Support (US), a supported employment programme based on the “place and train” model used in Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care – it will match disabled people and people with health conditions to open market jobs and fund support and training, and over the next year scoping work will be carried out to prepare Universal Support for delivery in England and Wales from 2024, and the pioneer work being done in local areas through IPSPC will be used as an evidence base for US
- the government will consult on options for increasing take up of occupational health provision
- introduce employment advisors in musculoskeletal conditions services in England

On 2 April 2023, World Autism Acceptance Day, DWP announced the launch of a new review into autism and employment. The review is being led by the Rt Hon Sir Robert Buckland KBE KC MP and is exploring ways to increase the number of autistic people in employment and to improve retention rates. The review is focused on:

- helping employers recruit and retain autistic people
- identifying barriers to this happening
- developing ways to overcome those barriers

The review will present recommendations to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions towards the end of 2023.

Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO)

FCDO’s [Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy](#), published in February 2022, sets out the UK’s approach to disability inclusion internationally up to 2030. The strategy covers areas such as education, health, economic empowerment and climate change. FCDO will continue to implement its Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy and is scrutinised by the External Disability Board which meets every 6 months.

[Westminster Foundation for Democracy](#) (WFD) is a FCDO arms-length body which works to strengthen democracy around the world. Their work includes promoting the inclusion of disabled people in decision-making. They are using FCDO funding to:

- provide public recommendations on political parties in Nigeria mainstreaming disabled people into their structures and activities
- support parliament in Sierra Leone to perform its oversight functions more effectively and to be more accountable, supporting participation and voice for less represented groups, including disabled people
- include disabled people in all relevant programme engagements with civil society, parliament, and lawmakers in Uganda
- support political parties in Kenya to improve their policies, representation, internal party structures and political commitments to disabled people (with DEMO Finland)

Through the [Global Disability Innovation Hub](#) and ATscale global partnership, FCDO will:

- contribute to improving affordable access to assistive technology in 6 lower or middle income countries
- establish at least 2 advanced partnerships with private organisations to increase investment in assistive technology
- support 10 assistive technology ventures in developing countries to develop and market new products

As set out in the Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy, FCDO's ambition is for all disabled people affected by crises to have equal access to essential services in safety and dignity and without discrimination. FCDO will:

- continue to ensure that inclusion is embedded in their response to humanitarian crises, including in Ukraine and Turkey/Syria
- produce guidance on safe and ethical collection of disaggregated data, including disability data, in gender-based violence in humanitarian settings - this will then be disseminated throughout the Humanitarian Department

Building on the UK's COP 26 presidency, FCDO will develop its work to strengthen and accelerate disability-inclusive climate action. They will:

- work with partners at the Green Climate Fund Board to look for ways to embed disability inclusion into the direction for the next period of 2024 to 2027
- through the [UK Partnering For Accelerated Climate Transition](#) programme, look to strengthen disability inclusion in its approach to gender equality and social inclusion across its portfolio, building on positive examples in Indonesia and the sustainable transport sector

FCDO's ambition is for all disabled people to realise their right to protection against poverty and risks to their livelihoods and wellbeing throughout their lives. They will:

- publish a UK-funded guidance note on disability-inclusive social protection through the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - this will focus on how to support the expansion of social protection systems that are responsive to the needs of disabled people and support participation and inclusion

FCDO has championed access to inclusive education and has helped children with disabilities to learn through its policies and programmes. This includes the [Department for Internal Development Education Policy 2018](#) and our [Girls' Education Challenge](#) (GEC) Fund which is driving national policy reform on inclusive education, enhancing understanding and responses to disability and inclusive education in the sector.

FCDO will:

- launch the Data for Foundational Learning programme for 2023 to 2027 - efforts to disaggregate data will be a priority, including data on disabled children
- require centrally managed education programmes to separate the data they collect on recipients to identify how many of those they are reaching have a disability. This data will then be reflected in a new Education Results framework later in 2023

HM Treasury (HMT)

HMT will continue to work with other departments to support delivery of their disability policies.

Home Office (HO)

The Border Force, within HO, is rolling out the use of BSL training for its staff. For example, the 'Start to Sign' course was extended in 2023 to Immigration Enforcement and over 150 officers from across both organisations have been trained so far. The courses, delivered by a profoundly d/Deaf trainer from the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID), provided each participant with a basic fluency in BSL.

HO and DHSC jointly led the 'Safe Care at Home Review', published on 12 June 2023, which looks into the protections and support available to adults with care and support needs who are being abused in their own homes by the people providing their care. The review has coordinated inputs from wider government, the d/Deaf and disability sectors, carers' organisations and other interested parties. In the coming months work will continue across government and with wider stakeholders to take forward the actions set out in the review. This work will continue to improve the support and protections available to people with care and support needs.

HO and MOJ have worked together as part of the government's commitment to tackling violence against women and girls. They have committed up to £6 million in funding for 'by and for' services for the 2 years to March 2025, recognising their importance in providing support to victims and survivors of domestic abuse. 'By and for' services are specialist services that are led, designed, and delivered by and for the users and communities they aim to serve, for example victims and survivors who are from ethnic minority backgrounds, d/Deaf and disabled and LGBT. This funding's main aim is to ensure there is no funding gap in specialist 'by and for' service provisions which could include disabled victims of domestic abuse. The funding will meet commitments made in the [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021](#) and the [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan 2022](#).

Ministry of Defence (MOD)

MOD is a member of [Employers for Carers](#) which, as part of Carers UK, promotes and provides guidance and support for staff who may have carers in their workforce.

Following a review of its existing policies, MOD will be giving support to carers and examining the experiences of families affected by caring responsibilities. A website is being created to support service personnel and their families. This will include policy, guidance, information and support for additional needs, disabilities and those who are carers.

Ministry of Justice (MOJ)

MOJ is working with partners such as the police and the Judicial College to ensure that each stage of the criminal justice journey considers the needs of neurodiverse people. This includes resettling people back into the community after serving their sentence. This will be reflected in the publication of a 12-month update on the progress of the [Cross-Government Neurodiversity Action Plan](#) in due course.

Substantial progress has already been made in prisons, with the introduction of the Neurodiversity Support Manager role. This will be rolled out across all prisons in England and Wales by 2024, along with the piloting of digital tools to improve support for neurodiverse people leaving prison.

MOJ will also continue to promote careers as magistrates to under-represented groups, including disabled people, to increase the diversity of the magistracy.

His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) is improving how reasonable adjustments are requested and managed in civil, family and tribunals courts. This will include asking service users for their support needs, and improving case management systems to make it easier for its staff to manage and deliver the adjustments.

HMCTS will introduce [the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme](#) for staff and users across all its sites as part of its commitment to the cross-government autism strategy. This will allow people to show that they may need additional support by wearing a sunflower lanyard.

Civil Service

13.6% of civil servants have a recorded disability. We are taking action to tackle underrepresentation and improve the support and experience for disabled people working in the Civil Service.

Government People Group (GPG), part of CO but with a cross civil service role, works across government to help departments to build a modern and effective civil service. They are working on a number of disability-specific actions including:

- working with DWP to increase the number of Civil Service organisations signed up to the [Disability Confident](#) employer scheme
- improving IT and accessibility for disabled civil servants, so they know what tools are available and where to find them
- increasing the number of people taking up internship programmes such as, Autism Exchange and Leonard Cheshire Change 100
- ensuring that all civil servants have the support and workplace adjustments they need to carry out their role, with the introduction of Civil Service Workplace Adjustment Standards and supporting products

The Government Property Agency (GPA), an executive agency of CO, is reshaping the relationship that civil servants, including disabled civil servants, have with their place of work by:

- delivering the ‘Hubs Changing Places’ paper to improve and complement their inclusivity offer
- updating the ‘Healthy Buildings Guide’ and the ‘Inclusive Design Guide’ in 2023, informed by industry best practices, to make workspaces in hub sites accessible and inclusive for all
- designing hub sites to take into account the needs of occupants who are neurodiverse
- updating the ‘Fire Evacuation Lift’ paper, which outlines best practice and the need for evacuation lifts in hub sites, to provide an inclusive dignified exit in the event of a fire and removing the need for ‘evac chairs’
- publishing ‘Room Briefing Sheets’ in 2023 and 2024 to provide clarity on design and inclusivity across all spaces in hub sites

Individual government departments are also taking steps to make improvements for civil servants. For example:

- CO is working in partnership with the Business Disability Forum (BDF) to run sessions on neurodiversity in the workplace, and ensure that support is available through the CO Inclusion Hub and accessible guidance on workplace adjustments
- MOD is reviewing its recruitment policies to identify and resolve any issues specific to candidates or employees with a disability as they progress through the recruitment processes
- HMT will review its performance management policies and processes and continue to improve how it delivers reasonable adjustments for its employees workplace
- FCDO is aiming to increase the number of staff with disabilities, including increased representation at senior levels

Chapter 4: Proposals for new actions led or coordinated by the Disability Unit

Summary

Chapter 3 set out the policy commitments by departments across government to improve the lives of disabled people.

This chapter sets out proposals for new actions led or co-ordinated by the Disability Unit (DU), part of the Cabinet Office. DU was established to work across government to break down the barriers faced by disabled people in the UK.

Chapter 5 will then ask for views about the areas of action across government and proposals in this chapter when considered as a whole package for 2023 to 2024. Responses to questions in Chapters 4 and 5 will inform the final Action Plan.

Explaining this chapter

This consultation document marks the listening stage of the Action Plan, and this chapter contains questions to start this process. Because of this, this chapter does not contain lots of very concrete, specific actions. Instead, it sets out a number of proposals - informed by the experiences of disabled people, research and the current policy landscape - as an initial step to make sure policy development direction is correct.

It includes 12 consultation questions - some with multiple parts - which you are invited to respond to. The questions are tailored to each policy. All consultation questions are optional. Responses to the consultation will inform how proposals set out in this chapter are taken forward in the Disability Action Plan.

Any detailed consultation on policies owned by other departments will be (or will have been), where appropriate, carried out by that department. However, respondents to this consultation may express views on policies in any part of this Disability Action Plan in their answers to the questions in Chapter 5. These views will be collated and will inform the DU's work across government in bringing together departments to develop actions in the DAP.

This chapter lays out the areas of action the DU proposes to lead or coordinate efforts around in 2023 to 2024 to improve the lives of disabled people in the UK.

Some of the areas of action proposed in this chapter are areas that are solely DU's responsibility. Others, particularly those which relate to research and task forces, are about using the DU's position in the Cabinet Office to give direction on issues that span several government departments.

The first section sets out how DU will improve disability inclusion in existing government policies. The second section sets out new areas of action that DU proposes to lead, focusing on issues that fall between different departments. The third section sets out the task forces that DU proposes to set up to increase cross-government collaboration. The final section focuses on actions to strengthen DU's evidence base in the short term, providing a solid foundation for future work.

1. Improving disability inclusion in existing government policies

This section sets out proposals aimed at working to improve the disability inclusion of government policies affecting everyone in society.

DU is proposing to improve disability inclusion in policies relating to:

- **access to elected office**
- **playground accessibility**
- **emergency planning and resilience work**
- **climate adaptations and mitigations**

Access to elected office

Disabled people make up 22% of the population³ but are underrepresented in political and public life⁴. It is important that people in elected roles are representative of the people and communities that they serve. It is also important that disabled people can see themselves represented at the highest levels of public life. The need for long-term solutions has been highlighted in research and by many stakeholders, including the Centenary Action Group on Disabled Women in Politics.⁵

The extra costs associated with disability are a significant barrier for some candidates and potential candidates to elected office. Political parties have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. This has been supplemented with government funds in the past - for example, through the [Access to Elected Office Fund](#). While such funds gave valuable support to some disabled candidates, it is recognised that they could have been more effective⁶ and that longer-term solutions are needed.

DU is proposing to review past and present funding to support disabled candidates into elected office. This would explore the merits of, and possible mechanisms for, setting up a long-term solution to funding. This review will focus primarily on elected offices like MP and local councillor roles, but could also include other public offices such as police and crime commissioners.

This review would involve working across parties, and could include setting up a cross-party steering group. DU would engage with people who have used the previous government funds, as well as interested stakeholders and campaigners, to ensure that disabled people's experiences inform the review.

³ Department for Work and Pensions, [Family Resources Survey 2020 to 2021](#)

⁴ [Barriers to Elected Office for Disabled People, 2021](#)

⁵ [Centenary Action Group, Overcoming the barriers to disabled women's involvement in politics, May 2022](#)

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-elected-office-fund-evaluation-report>

While funding can be an important barrier to some disabled people interested in elected office, it is not the only barrier⁷. **DU is proposing to set up a GOV.UK webpage providing guidance and signposting support such as training.**

In addition to the actions above, DU is also interested to know what more government and other key players might do to support disabled people into elected office.

DU recognises that political parties have already chosen their candidates for most of the winnable seats in the next general election, so this work is unlikely to increase the number of disabled candidates in this instance. DU would carry out work in the short term, aiming to increase representation in the longer-term.

Consultation question:

DU recognises that disabled people are underrepresented in elected office (for example, as MPs or local councillors). DU is proposing to carry out a review of funding for reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates, with the aim of finding a long-term solution. They are also proposing to set up a GOV.UK webpage to signpost guidance and training. The aim of both of these would be to increase the representation of disabled people in elected office over time.

1a. To what extent do you agree with proposals to review funding support and create an online hub to improve access to elected office for disabled people?

Select one option

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/barriers-to-elected-office-for-disabled-people>; <https://centenaryaction.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/CAG-Overcoming-the-barriers-to-womens-involvement-in-politics.pdf>

1b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Enter your answer here

1c. If you know of existing guidance or training for disabled candidates to elected office that you think should be included on the GOV.UK webpage, please share them.

Enter your answer here

Playground accessibility

DU wants to make it as easy as possible for local authorities to make the playgrounds they build or refurbish, accessible for disabled children. Examples of accessibility features in playgrounds include even ground, accessible play equipment and sufficiently wide pathways⁸.

Accessibility is an important consideration for local authorities when building playgrounds. Stakeholders working in this area indicate that much expertise has been lost in recent years. A lot of guidance is available on accessible playgrounds, but it comes from many different sources and can be difficult to find, as it is not currently available in one place.

DU is proposing to address this by creating an GOV.UK online hub of accessible playground guidance. The hub would bring together existing guidance, making it as easy as possible for local authorities to achieve their ambition for more accessible playgrounds. DU would work with key partners, including disabled people's organisations (DPOs), to raise awareness among local authorities.

DU will also explore whether the government should make it mandatory for playground refurbishment to meet existing accessible playground guidance standards.

Please turn to the next page for questions relating to this proposal.

⁸ <https://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/research-policy/our-lives-our-journey/disabled-children-and-their-families/>

Consultation question:

DU is proposing to create an online hub of guidance about accessible playgrounds. The hub would provide information to make it easier for local authorities to make the playgrounds they build or refurbish accessible to disabled children.

2a. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to create a hub of guidance about playground accessibility?

Select one option

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2b. To what extent do you agree that the voluntary standards for playground accessibility should be made mandatory?

Select one option

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2c. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Enter your answer here

2d. If you know of existing guidance that DU should consider including on the hub, please share them.

Enter your answer here

Emergency planning and resilience work

Emergency planning is done to make sure that plans are in place to deal with:

- extreme weather events like flooding
- major disruptions to national infrastructure like significant power outages
- other emergencies like the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19)

Resilience work helps organisations and governments to prepare for emergencies.

Research shows that disabled people can experience emergency situations differently to non-disabled people. For example, disabled people were more likely to feel uncomfortable leaving the house and more likely to feel worried than non-disabled people during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹ There have also been increasing incidences of more extreme weather in the UK.¹⁰ In response to emergencies like these, disabled people have expressed increasing concerns about local and national government developing emergency and resilience plans that are not disability inclusive enough.

The way that disabled people rely on national infrastructure or are affected by emergencies may be different and have different or more severe consequences than for non-disabled people. For example, a power outage for a disabled person who relies on life-preserving electrical equipment could put them in a life-or-death situation. This is a crucial consideration when planning for the possibility of power outages.

Government departments already consider the needs of disabled people in emergency planning and resilience work, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. However, DU recognises the increasing concerns expressed by disabled people on this topic and wants to go further.

DU proposes to work with relevant policy teams across government and other relevant partners to ensure stronger engagement with disabled people in resilience and emergency planning. They will facilitate increased cross-government engagement between disabled people's organisations (DPOs) and relevant policy makers. This will help to magnify disabled people's voices and the experiences of disabled people, and support more disability-inclusive policy making.

Please turn to the next page for questions relating to this proposal.

⁹ [ONS, Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain: March 2020 to December 2021](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/understanding-climate/uk-and-global-extreme-events-heavy-rainfall-and-floods>

Consultation question

DU is proposing to support increased disability inclusion in emergency planning and in resilience work. Examples of emergencies include extreme weather events, power outages or outbreaks of disease. DU proposes doing this by increasing the reach of disabled people’s voices through greater engagement with disabled people’s organisations (DPOs).

3a. To what extent do you agree with the proposed plan to increase disability inclusion in emergency planning and resilience work?

Select one option

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Enter your answer here

3c. If there are particular DPOs that you think should be engaged in this area, please share them.

Enter your answer here

Climate adaptations and mitigations

Climate adaptations are actions taken to adapt to climate change. Climate mitigations are actions taken to change how we do things to prevent or reduce our impact on climate change. Climate adaptations and actions to reach net zero by 2050 are increasingly important areas of government policy in response to climate change.¹¹ It is important that these policies are designed to be disability-inclusive by both local and national governments.

DU is aware from its work in the UK and abroad that this is of increasing interest to many disabled people in the UK, because of the increasing impact on their daily lives. For example, the introduction of Clean Air Zones (CAZ) and the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) has led to some disabled people reporting increased exclusion from some city centres.

It is also important that research in this area considers the needs of disabled people. The UK is home to leading academics and activists in both climate action and disability inclusion. Despite this, research in this area is often focused on climate change and health, rather than disability.

Disabled people's organisations working in the UK and internationally are increasingly highlighting the need for action. **DU is proposing to lead work across government to support climate adaptations and mitigations that are disability inclusive.**

This work would include a high-profile conference on climate adaptation and disability. The conference would encourage disabled people, academics and policymakers to share their knowledge. It would raise awareness of the need for action and research in this area, creating much-needed networking opportunities. The intention is for this conference to lead to action inside and outside of government.

DU also proposes to:

- work with disabled people with the relevant expertise to develop and share guidance for local authorities on disability-inclusive approaches to Clean Air Zones (CAZ) and Ultra-Low Emission Zones (ULEZ)
- commission research to address the lack of evidence in this area - for example, this could map the disability-inclusiveness of climate adaptations and mitigations in the UK, providing areas for action for the working group
- coordinate a cross-government working group to address issues raised through this consultation and in the research commissioned

DU is interested in hearing about any other specific climate adaptations and mitigations disabled people think would benefit from more disability inclusive approaches.

Please turn to the next page for questions relating to this proposal.

¹¹ See the [Net Zero Strategy](#), the [Net Zero Review](#) and [Mission Zero: Independent review of net zero from the House of Lords](#)

Consultation question

DU has identified climate adaptations and mitigations as an emerging area in need of increased disability inclusion. This would mean making sure that measures addressing climate change consider and respond to the needs of disabled people. Examples of climate adaptations and mitigations include measures implemented to change people’s car use and energy consumption.

4a. To what extent do you agree with the need to focus on the emerging area of climate adaptations and mitigations?

Select one option

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don’t know or unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4b. If there is anything further that you would like the government to do to increase disability inclusion in climate adaptations and mitigations, or you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

[**Please note:** the Disability Action Plan covers a short period of time from 2023 to 2024. While all responses to this question will be considered, any large reforms are unlikely to be within its scope. You are invited to focus particularly on the changes that can be delivered by DU in 2023 to 2024.]

Enter your answer here

4c. DU has already identified Clean Air Zones (CAZ) and the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) policies as an area for action. Please tell us if there are other climate adaptations or mitigations that require greater disability inclusion?

Enter your answer here

2. New actions focused on the specific needs of disabled people

Proposed actions in this section are focused on the specific needs of disabled people. DU understands that this collection of standalone actions does not address all of the issues that disabled people highlight as needing action.

Instead, they are new actions that address a variety of areas of immediate interest to many disabled people. All have the potential to raise the profile of disabled people, highlight their talents and needs, and encourage disability inclusion across society.

DU is proposing the following new disability-specific actions, over and above those already set out by government departments in Chapter 3:

- **creating a Disability Enabled Badge to encourage disability awareness in businesses and services and improve access for disabled people**
- **commissioning a feasibility report into Great Britain bidding to host the Special Olympics World Summer Games in 2031**
- **working to address access refusals for guide dogs**
- **raising the profile of assistive technology**

Disability Enabled Badge

Disabled people are more likely to experience difficulties accessing products and services than non-disabled people¹². **DU is proposing to develop a Disability Enabled Badge to encourage businesses and services to train their staff in disability awareness.** Disabled people deserve to have increased confidence that their needs will be considered and to reduce the experience of being unable to access a business or service due to accessibility issues.

The [Disability Confident scheme](#) has had success in supporting employers to become more disability inclusive. The 'Disability Enabled Badge' would aim to replicate this for businesses and services, improving the experience of disabled people as they shop and access leisure, cultural, statutory and other services.

A number of providers already offer disability awareness training to businesses. While much of this training is extremely valuable, DU recognises that provision is fragmented and often focuses on a single disability or condition. These issues can act as a barrier to businesses wanting to provide comprehensive disability awareness training to their employees.

This scheme would seek to bring training options together under one umbrella, making it easier to access for businesses and providing a level of quality assurance for disabled consumers. It does not seek to compete with specialist, condition or impairment related training provided by disabled people's organisations. DU would engage with disabled people and interested existing providers offering similar training packages as part of the development of this scheme to ensure the experiences of disabled people are reflected throughout.

This action is at an early stage of development. DU is proposing to run a pilot in 5 sectors in spring 2024 to test the action's viability. They are still determining how the scheme would work, but it is likely that businesses and services who sign up would undergo training and

¹² [ONS, Disabled people's access to products and services, Great Britain: February to March 2022](#)

receive a ‘Disability Enabled Badge’ once a certain proportion of front-facing staff have been trained. This badge could be used publicly by businesses - including in their own branding - to increase confidence among their disabled customers.

If the pilot is successful, training would be provided by an external provider. This scheme would be voluntary, with training paid for by the businesses and services that choose to participate. The increased Purple Pound¹³ spend would hopefully cover the cost to businesses of doing so.

Consultation question

DU is proposing to develop a ‘Disability Enabled Badge’ to encourage businesses and services to train their staff in disability awareness, and to make it easy for disabled customers to identify businesses and services that have done so.

5a. To what extent do you agree that this scheme would give increased confidence to disabled customers when accessing businesses or services?

Select one option

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Enter your answer here

¹³ The [Purple Pound](#) refers to the spending power of disabled households

Special Olympics World Summer Games

In the UK, people with learning disabilities face more barriers to healthcare¹⁴ and a significantly shortened life expectancy¹⁵. In addition, the disability pay gap is widest for people with autism and with severe or specific learning difficulties¹⁶.

The Special Olympics is a global movement that aims to tackle inactivity, stigma, isolation and injustice; to drive social change for people with learning disabilities. The Special Olympics World Games are the organisation's flagship event. They take place every 2 years, alternating between summer and winter sports. The 2023 Special Olympics in Berlin will bring together 7,000 athletes from 170 countries in 24 different sports.

Special Olympics Great Britain (GB) is a non-profit organisation and the largest provider of year-round sports training and athletic competition in summer and winter sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. It operates across Scotland, England and Wales and currently has a network of 95 all ability, inclusive sports accredited programmes and delivery partners. It offers activities in 27 different sports which are delivered by a team of over 3,500 volunteers, supporting more than 6,500 athletes.

DU is proposing to work with DCMS to commission a feasibility report into Great Britain hosting the Special Olympics Summer Games in 2031. The study would consider several factors like location, funding and the suitability of transportation, accommodation and other infrastructure. This is the first step towards making a bid to host the games.

DU hopes that bringing the Special Olympics World Summer Games to Great Britain would:

- raise the profile of people with learning disabilities and inspire greater grassroots participation
- encourage increased support for disabled people to build new skills, exercise existing talents and celebrate successes
- have a positive economic and social impact, bringing athletes and spectators from over 200 countries to Great Britain
- widen awareness about disability on a national and international level

The UK Government is keen to ensure that this study is informed by the experiences of disabled people. For this reason, DU is keen to hear about grassroots organisations that it would be helpful for us to engage with.

Please turn to the next page for questions relating to this proposal.

¹⁴ [Equality and Human Rights Commission, Being Disabled in Britain \(2017\)](#), p96-7

¹⁵ [Equality and Human Rights Commission, Is Britain Fairer? \(2018\)](#), p89

¹⁶ [ONS, Disability Pay Gaps in the UK: 2021](#)

Consultation question

DU and DCMS are proposing to work together to commission a feasibility report into Great Britain hosting the Special Olympics Summer Games in 2031. The Special Olympics is a global movement to drive social change for people with learning disabilities. The aim of hosting is to raise awareness of learning disabilities, drive greater grassroots participation and celebrate the wider world of human talents and potential.

6a. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to explore hosting the Special Olympics Summer Games in Great Britain as a way of meeting this aim?

Select one option

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Enter your answer here

6c. To help lay the groundwork for a bid, please inform us of any learning disability sports organisations that you think should be engaged, if the Special Olympics Summer Games were hosted in Great Britain?

Enter your answer here

Addressing access refusals for guide dogs

Thousands of disabled people rely on guide dogs to help them with their daily activities. People who use guide dogs are protected under the Equality Act 2010. This means that it is illegal to refuse entry to a disabled person with a guide dog¹⁷ in all but the most exceptional circumstances.¹⁸

Despite their rights under the Equality Act 2010, disabled people say they continue to experience access refusals because they have a guide dog. An access refusal is when a business or service refuses entry to someone because they have a guide dog with them.

A 2022 survey by Guide Dogs UK found that 81% of respondents had experienced an access refusal, with 73% having been refused access in the previous year. Food and drink outlets were the most common locations of the access refusals.¹⁹ Blind and partially sighted people repeatedly highlight the devastating impact that these events have.

DU is proposing to work to reduce access refusals of guide dogs. They would work with guide dog users and guide dog organisations to find out what more the government can do. This would include consideration of increasing the civil penalties (fines) for access refusals, and continuing the DU's awareness-raising work in this area.

Consultation question

It is illegal to refuse entry to a disabled person with a guide dog under the Equality Act 2010. An access refusal is when a person with a guide dog is denied entry to a business or service despite having these rights. DU is proposing to work with the guide dog sector to establish what more the government can do to address access refusals experienced by people with guide dogs. This would include consideration of increasing the civil penalties (fines) for access refusals.

7a. To what extent do you agree with the proposed plan to work more closely with the guide dog sector to establish what more government can do to address access refusals of guide dogs?

Select one option

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7b. To what extent do you agree that increasing fines would address the issue of access refusals for guide dogs?

Select one option

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹⁷ [EHRC, Assistance Dogs. A Guide for All Businesses](#), p9

¹⁸ [EHRC, Assistance Dogs. A Guide for All Businesses](#), p12

¹⁹ Guide Dogs UK, [Let's Open Doors. A report into the impact of access refusals for guide dog owners in 2022](#), p3

7c. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Enter your answer here

Raising the profile of assistive technology

The government wants to make the UK the most accessible place in the world to live and work with technology, as part of its wider vision of transforming the lives of disabled people. By working across government and in partnership with the assistive technology sector, we want to ensure assistive technology is available to those who need it, and to ensure that disabled people are confident in using it.

Assistive technology covers a wide range of products and adaptations which can help a disabled person navigate and participate in a world that is not always designed with their needs in mind. ‘Low tech’ assistive technology can include items like ramps or modified can openers. ‘High tech’ assistive technology can include voice-activated systems that control areas of the home or cochlear implants. Assistive technology is key to enabling independence, greater inclusion and participation for disabled people.

Recent research commissioned by DU found that 87% of disabled people need at least one assistive technology product, with 83% of disabled people saying that their assistive technology was very important at all times. However, 31% of disabled people report not having the assistive technology products they need to thrive - or even participate - in daily life. 45% of respondents stated that they do not have assistive technology because they ‘cannot afford’ it.²⁰

Feedback from stakeholders and research commissioned by DU also highlights a lack of access to information for disabled people, their families and carers about:

- the assistive technology available
- how to use the assistive technology they may already have

For example, some disabled people may benefit from knowing more about their smartphone’s accessibility features and how to use them.

DU is proposing to address this by:

- **raising the profile of assistive technology within government and appointing a senior assistive technology champion**
- **enhancing the knowledge and skills of civil servants and other public sector service delivery staff**

²⁰ Research conducted by GDI Hub on behalf of the Disability Unit, published 13th June <https://www.disabilityinnovation.com/publications/at-country-capacity-england>

These proposed actions are focused on first raising government awareness on assistive and accessible technology. It is important for government and public sector service delivery staff to support disabled people's knowledge of and access to assistive technology.

An assistive and accessible technology champion's role would be to raise awareness of assistive technology across government. Technology touches every aspect of our lives. No single department can own this agenda, and the role of the assistive technology champion would be to work across government. The assistive technology champion would be a senior role, and could be an external appointee or part of a ministerial role.

The assistive technology champion would work alongside other cross-government work to raise the profile of assistive technology. For example, scheduling regular cross-government discussions on assistive technology with existing groups, such as the Ministerial Disability Champions and the DU assistive technology officials group.

DU also proposes developing a feasibility study to explore assistive technology training for civil servants and other public sector service delivery staff. DWP and Microsoft's 'Accessibility Fundamentals programme' has successfully trained 95% of DWP's 26,000 Work Coaches, enhancing their ability to give disabled people improved support and guidance when they look for employment. DU would investigate whether this, or similar, training could be provided to civil servants online. DU would work with colleagues across government to see if it could also be rolled out more widely to other customer service delivery organisation staff.

These proposed short-term actions to raise understanding and awareness of assistive technology within government would contribute to a longer-term goal of increasing disabled people's knowledge of the assistive technology available and how to access it. The government can only support and advise disabled people to access assistive technology if it has up-to-date knowledge of the field itself.

Together with ongoing work in DU to strengthen the evidence base around assistive technology, this work would lead to improvements for disabled people in the UK in how they can access and use assistive technology.

Consultation question

DU is proposing a number of activities to raise the profile and understanding of assistive technology in government. Examples of assistive technology include 'low tech' products like ramps and modified can openers, and 'high tech' products like voice-activated control systems within the home. The aim of this work is to ensure the government can keep up to date with the assistive technology field, so it can advise disabled people on what assistive technology could support them and how to access it.

8a. To what extent do you agree that access to assistive technology would be improved by better-informed advice from public sector staff?

Select one option

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Enter your answer here

3. Improving cross-government collaboration

DU has identified a number of areas where coordinated action is needed across government on a particular issue which is important to disabled people, and where they would be well-placed to provide leadership and guidance. They propose to establish task forces to improve cross-government collaboration in these areas.

The purpose of these task forces is to bring together representatives from across government on an issue that crosses multiple departments. All of these task forces would aim to:

- gain a greater understanding of the issue, if it is not already well understood
- establish the actions which individual departments need to take to address it

DU is proposing to establish task forces in the following areas:

- **wellbeing and opportunities for disabled children**
- **support for disabled parents**

Wellbeing and opportunities for disabled children

9% of children are disabled. The most common impairment type for children is social and behavioural impairments, affecting 37% of disabled children.²¹ Disabled children are often included in the wider category of ‘pupils with special educational needs and disability’ (SEND), but not all disabled children have a recorded need and not all children with a recorded need are disabled.

Research shows that disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN) have a greater risk of negative experiences impacting their wellbeing and opportunities throughout their lives. For example, children with SEN are more likely to be excluded²² from school, and have lower average educational attainment at all levels.²³ Disabled children aged 10 to 15 are almost twice as likely to be a victim of crime than non-disabled children.²⁴ Disabled children are also at higher risk of abuse and neglect.

²¹ [Family Resources Survey 2020 to 2021](#)

²² [Department for Education \(2021\), Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England](#)

²³ [Department for Education, Special Educational Needs Publication, June 2022](#)

²⁴ [ONS, Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2020 - Annual trend and demographic tables, Table D5, 22 July 2021](#)

Improving the wellbeing and opportunities of disabled children is a very broad area, with work spanning different government departments. DU is proposing to lead work across government to improve disabled children's wellbeing and opportunities, setting them up to live fulfilling lives and to reach their potential.

To achieve this, **DU proposes establishing a cross-government task force focused on maximising disabled children's wellbeing and opportunities.** This group would bring key departments together to ensure that support and services delivered across government work well together, making improvements where possible. The group will actively consider the different challenges faced by children with different impairment types.

DU recently commissioned the Children's Commissioner to undertake research into the experiences of disabled children. This report, due to be published in summer 2023, identifies a number of areas of importance that DU proposes should be the focus of the task force.

These are:

- transitions to adulthood
- accessibility of public spaces and transport
- bullying, personal safety and the impact on wellbeing
- earlier identification of need and support for families

Consultation question

DU is proposing establishing a task force to improve the wellbeing and opportunities of disabled children. This task force would bring multiple government departments together to work on a broad issue that they are all responsible for in different ways. It would aim to improve the way government services for disabled children work together. The proposed areas of focus would be: transitions to adulthood, accessibility of public spaces and transport, bullying, personal safety and the impact on wellbeing and early identification of need and support for families.

9a. To what extent do you agree with each of the following proposed areas of focus?

Select one option for each row

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
Transitions to adulthood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility of public spaces and transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bullying, personal safety and impact on wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Earlier identification of need and support for families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9b. If there are other issues that you think this taskforce should consider, or you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

[Please note: the Disability Action Plan covers a short period of time from 2023 to 2024. While all responses to this question will be considered, any large reforms are unlikely to be within its scope. You are invited to focus particularly on the changes that can be delivered by DU in 2023 to 2024.]

Enter your answer here

Support for disabled parents

There is very little evidence on the experiences of disabled parents. DU wants to use this listening stage to learn more about these experiences, and then take steps to address them. **DU is proposing to explore the challenges faced by disabled parents, and to establish a task force to consider and implement the findings.**

DU's initial research has highlighted 3 areas where more work is needed:

- accessibility issues in parenting support from health and care services provided to disabled parents
- difficulties experienced within the family courts and child protection (including the removal of children) – for example, autistic fathers feeling unable to adequately present their case²⁵ and high rates of children being removed from disabled parents who may not have received adequate support²⁶
- domestic abuse, since disabled people are more than twice as likely to have experienced this than non-disabled people²⁷

DU's work will build on this initial evidence gathering and stakeholder engagement throughout the consultation process to establish the focus of the task force. The task force will consider the findings, and will be expected to act on them within 2023 to 2024.

²⁵ George, R, Crane, L and Remington, A. "[Our normal is different': autistic adults' experiences of the family courts](#)". Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law 2020: volume 42, pages 204-20; Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning, [Press release: University of Bedfordshire, Disabled parents often seen as risk to their children rather than given support, report warns](#); University of Bristol, [Good practice guidance on working with parents with a learning disability](#), p75 (on specific examples of issues faced by parents with learning difficulties)

²⁶ 5 News, [Staggering numbers of children of disabled parents being taken into care](#), 25th January 2023

²⁷ [ONS, Disability and Crime, England and Wales: 2020 Table 1, Table 6. 10 Feb 2022](#)

Support for disabled parents spans the work of multiple departments, and the task force would reflect this in its membership. The work of the task force would run in parallel to other work already taking place across government which relates in part to support for disabled parents. For example, the recent green paper on SEND and Alternative Provision²⁸ and the current work on children's social care²⁹ outlined in Chapter 3.

Consultation question

DU is proposing to establish a task force on improving support for disabled parents. This would bring multiple government departments together on a broad issue that they are all responsible for in different ways. DU has initially identified disabled parents' access to parenting support in health and care services, family courts and child protection and domestic abuse support as likely areas of focus.

10a. To what extent do you agree with each of the following proposed areas of focus?

Select one option for each row

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
Access to parenting support in health and care services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family Courts and child protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic abuse support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10b. If there are other issues that you think this taskforce should consider, or you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

[Please note: the Disability Action Plan covers a short period of time from 2023 to 2024. While all responses to this question will be considered, any large reforms are unlikely to be within its scope. You are invited to focus particularly on the changes that can be delivered by DU in 2023 to 2024.]

Enter your answer here

²⁸ [DfE, SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan consultation](#)

²⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/long-term-strategy-launched-to-fix-childrens-social-care>

4. Strengthening the evidence base

This section will set out the short term areas of action DU is proposing to undertake in 2023 and 2024, to lay the foundations for longer-term work. DU wants to ensure that disability policy across government is grounded in a strong evidence base, and informed by a longer-term view of the priorities and issues disabled people face in daily life. DU is proposing 2 pieces of work to achieve this in the short term:

- disability evidence and data improvement programme
- disability foresight

Disability evidence and data improvement programme

A comprehensive and robust evidence base is a vital foundation for good policy-making. The [Life Opportunities Survey](#), which ran from 2009 to 2014, looked at the experiences of disabled and non-disabled people in areas including work, education, social participation and use of transportation and public services. Since this survey ended, there has been no regular and robust government data on a broad range of issues affecting disabled people. An assessment of equalities data carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has identified gaps in the quality, quantity and coverage of UK data on disability.³⁰

Government evidence and evaluation of disabled people usually focus on outcomes – the final result of a policy area or service, such as employment or a degree. While useful in certain contexts, this information does not give the complete picture of the impacts on disabled people or the barriers they face. It is also not routinely collected in a way that allows broad comparisons to be made. The wider disability evidence landscape is patchy, and does not provide the evidence necessary to develop and assess policies and services effectively.

DU is proposing to:

- **develop a cross-government disability evidence and data improvement programme**
- **explore a set of indicators to assess the effectiveness of policies and services across government against the things that matter to disabled people**

DU has already undertaken activities to improve the evidence base on disabled people in the UK, including:

- research focused on collecting in-depth data about the experiences disabled people³¹
- work with ONS to develop a new survey which would provide data about disabled people's experiences, their needs, what enables them and the barriers they encounter

DU is proposing to build on this by developing a cross-government programme of data and evidence improvement. The immediate aim is to improve the existing data and begin collecting data where there are evidence gaps, supplemented by additional qualitative research where possible. The medium-term aim is to ensure that government policy is designed and evaluated against the things that matter most to disabled people.

DU will also work with other government departments to:

- review existing data and improve consistency across government

³⁰ ONS, [Equalities Data Audit Final Report](#) (2018)

³¹ Disability Unit, [Exploring the Everyday Lives of Disabled People](#) (2021)

- establish an experiences of disabled people panel and a cross-government working group
- work with ONS to improve the quality and coverage of disability data

This will run alongside work to harmonise the concepts and definitions used in the data across government departments, to allow for broad comparisons. Together, these actions support significant improvements to the evidence base.

In addition, **DU is proposing to explore a set of indicators to assess the effectiveness of policies and services across government against the things that matter most to disabled people.** These indicators would enable the government to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of policies and services in relation to the impact they have on disabled people's lives. This would be pursued in close collaboration with other government departments.

Consultation question

Government evidence and evaluation on disabled people usually focuses on outcomes. Outcomes data is that which measures the final result of a policy area or service, such as being in employment or having a degree. This type of information can be very valuable, but DU believes that improving the lives of disabled people also requires government evidence and evaluation that focuses on the experiences of disabled people. This additional evidence helps to put outcomes data in context, allowing a clearer picture of how policies really impact disabled people's lives.

11a. To what extent do you agree with this proposed approach to evidence and evaluation?

Select one option

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Enter your answer here

Disability foresight

An essential principle of inclusive design is to build in inclusivity from the start, rather than add it on later in the design process. For disabled people, this means designing policies and services that are accessible and promote inclusion rather than creating barriers and exclusion. Doing this effectively requires knowledge of emerging issues that will affect disabled people.

DU is proposing to commission research to better understand emerging issues and evolving priorities for disabled people in the next 5, 10 and 20 years. Foresight research aims to help policy makers better understand the uncertainties of the future and to explore possible futures, allowing policy makers to predict and plan for different possible future scenarios. The data and insights contribute to more resilient policy by considering the things that might happen or become significant over time.

Consultation question

DU is proposing to commission foresight research to better understand the emerging issues and evolving priorities for disabled people in the next 5, 10 and 20 years. Foresight explores possible futures, and allows policy makers to predict and plan for possible future scenarios. It enables policy makers to consider issues other than those that are already known to be important.

12a. To what extent do you agree that DU should focus some of its evidence and insight work on anticipating future challenges for disabled people, rather than focusing solely on further exploring known needs?

Select one option

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Enter your answer here

Chapter 5: Summary and next steps

Complementing the plans set out in Chapter 3, the proposed areas of action described in Chapter 4 of this consultation are proposals for immediate steps that could be taken to continue to make progress on improving the lives of disabled people. Responses to this consultation will be invaluable in supporting DU to review, revise and develop the areas of action proposed in Chapter 4.

Government is also interested in hearing your views on the plans and suggested areas of action as a whole. In particular, DU is also interested in hearing about additional or alternative actions that should be considered that would make a significant difference to the lives of disabled people. Views and evidence provided through this listening stage will inform what is included in the published Disability Action Plan.

Please note that the Disability Action Plan will not include new announcements of wider reforms. Instead, it will:

- highlight reforms being taken forward through other strategies or action plans across government
- set out immediate action the government will take in 2023 and 2024 to improve disabled people's lives
- include actions that support laying the foundations for longer-term change

Please turn to the next page for questions relating to this proposal.

Consultation questions

13. What do you think of the plans and suggested areas of action described in this consultation as a whole? Are these the right things for the government to be focusing on over the next year?

Enter your answer here

14. What alternative actions might the government consider that would make a positive difference to the lives of disabled people?

Enter your answer here

Next steps

This consultation ends on 06/10/2023. All consultation responses will then be considered carefully in autumn 2023, before the final Disability Action Plan is finalised and published.

Thank you for participating in this consultation exercise.

Consultation Questions

This page brings all of the consultation questions from Chapters 4 and 5 into one place for ease of reference. **We would welcome responses to the following questions set out in this consultation paper.**

Elected office

DU recognises that disabled people are underrepresented in elected office (for example, as MPs or local councillors). DU is proposing to carry out a review of funding for reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates, with the aim of finding a long-term solution. They are also proposing to set up a GOV.UK webpage to signpost guidance and training. The aim of both of these would be to increase the representation of disabled people in elected office over time.

- 1a.** To what extent do you agree with proposals to review funding support and create an online hub to improve access to elected office for disabled people?
- 1b.** If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.
(Suggested maximum 500 words)
- 1c.** If you know of existing guidance or training for disabled candidates to elected office that you think should be included on the GOV.UK webpage, please share them.

Accessible playgrounds

DU is proposing to create an online hub of guidance about accessible playgrounds. The hub would provide information to make it easier for local authorities to make the playgrounds they build or refurbish accessible to disabled children.

- 2a.** To what extent do you agree with the proposal to create a hub of guidance about playground accessibility?
- 2b.** To what extent do you agree that the voluntary standards for playground accessibility should be made mandatory?
- 2c.** If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.
(Suggested maximum 500 words)
- 2d.** If you know of existing guidance that DU should consider including on the hub, please share them.

Emergency planning and Resilience work

DU is proposing to support increased disability inclusion in emergency planning and in resilience work. Examples of emergencies include extreme weather events, power outages or outbreaks of disease. DU proposes doing this by increasing the reach of disabled people's voices through greater engagement with disabled people's organisations (DPOs).

- 3a.** To what extent do you agree with the proposed plan to increase disability inclusion in emergency planning and resilience work?

3b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

3c. If there are particular DPOs that you think should be engaged in this area, please share them.

Climate adaptations and mitigations

DU has identified climate adaptations and mitigations as an emerging area in need of increased disability inclusion. This would mean making sure that measures addressing climate change consider and respond to the needs of disabled people. Examples of climate adaptations and mitigations include measures implemented to change people's car use and energy consumption.

4a. To what extent do you agree with the need to focus on the emerging area of climate adaptations and mitigations?

4b. If there is anything further that you would like the government to do to increase disability inclusion in climate adaptations and mitigations, or you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

[Please note: the Disability Action Plan covers a short period of time from 2023 to 2024. While all responses to this question will be considered, any large reforms are unlikely to be within its scope. You are invited to focus particularly on the changes that can be delivered by DU in 2023 to 2024.]

4c. DU has already identified Clean Air Zones (CAZ) and the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) policies as an area for action. Please tell us if there are other climate adaptations or mitigations that require greater disability inclusion?

Disability Enabled Badge

DU is proposing to develop a Disability Enabled Badge to encourage businesses and services to train their staff in disability awareness, and to make it easy for disabled customers to identify businesses and services that have done so.

5a. To what extent do you agree that this scheme would give increased confidence to disabled customers when accessing businesses or services?

5b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Special Olympics

DU and DCMS are proposing to work together to commission a feasibility report into Great Britain hosting the Special Olympics Summer Games in 2031. The Special Olympics is a global movement to drive social change for people with learning disabilities. The aim of hosting is to raise awareness of learning disabilities, drive greater grassroots participation and celebrate the wider world of human talents and potential.

6a. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to explore hosting the Special Olympics Summer Games in Great Britain as a way of meeting this aim?

6b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

6c. To help lay the groundwork for a bid, please inform us of any learning disability sports organisations that you think should be engaged, if the Special Olympics Summer Games were hosted in Great Britain?

Addressing access refusals for guide dogs

It is illegal to refuse entry to a disabled person with a guide dog under the Equality Act 2010. An access refusal is when a person with a guide dog is denied entry to a business or service despite having these rights. DU is proposing to work with the guide dog sector to establish what more the government can do to address access refusals experienced by people with guide dogs. This would include consideration of increasing the civil penalties (fines) for access refusals.

7a. To what extent do you agree with the proposed plan to work more closely with the guide dog sector to establish what more government can do to address access refusals of guide dogs?

7b. To what extent do you agree that increasing fines would address the issue of access refusals for guide dogs?

7c. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.
(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Raising the profile of assistive technology

DU is proposing a number of activities to raise the profile and understanding of assistive technology in government. Examples of assistive technology include 'low tech' products like ramps and modified can openers, and 'high tech' products like voice-activated control systems within the home. The aim of this work is to ensure the government can keep up to date with the assistive technology field, so it can advise disabled people on what assistive technology could support them and how to access it.

8a. To what extent do you agree that access to assistive technology would be improved by better-informed advice from public sector staff?

8b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.
(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Wellbeing and opportunities of disabled children

DU is proposing establishing a task force to improve the wellbeing and opportunities of disabled children. This task force would bring multiple government departments together to work on a broad issue that they are all responsible for in different ways. It would aim to improve the way government services for disabled children work together. The proposed areas of focus would be: transitions to adulthood, accessibility of public spaces and transport, bullying, personal safety and the impact on wellbeing and early identification of need and support for families.

9a. To what extent do you agree with each of the following proposed areas of focus?

- transitions to adulthood
- accessibility of public spaces and transport
- bullying, personal safety and impact on wellbeing

- early identification of need and support for families

9b. If there are other issues that you think this taskforce should consider, or you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

[Please note: the Disability Action Plan covers a short period of time from 2023 to 2024. While all responses to this question will be considered, any large reforms are unlikely to be within its scope. You are invited to focus particularly on the changes that can be delivered by DU in 2023 to 2024.]

Support for disabled parents

DU is proposing to establish a task force on improving support for disabled parents. This would bring multiple government departments together on a broad issue that they are all responsible for in different ways. DU has initially identified disabled parents' access to parenting support in health and care services, family courts and child protection and domestic abuse support as likely areas of focus.

10a. To what extent do you agree with each of the following proposed areas of focus?

- access to parenting support in health and care services
- Family Courts and child protection
- domestic abuse support

10b. If there are other issues that you think this taskforce should consider, or you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

[Please note: the Disability Action Plan covers a short period of time from 2023 to 2024. While all responses to this question will be considered, any large reforms are unlikely to be within its scope. You are invited to focus particularly on the changes that can be delivered by DU in 2023 to 2024.]

Disability evidence and data improvement programme

Government evidence and evaluation on disabled people usually focuses on outcomes. Outcomes data is that which measures the final result of a policy area or service, such as being in employment or having a degree. This type of information can be very valuable, but DU believes that improving the lives of disabled people also requires government evidence and evaluation that focuses on the experiences of disabled people. This additional evidence helps to put outcomes data in context, allowing a clearer picture of how policies really impact disabled people's lives.

11a. To what extent do you agree with this proposed approach to evidence and evaluation?

11b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.

(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Disability foresight

DU is proposing to commission foresight research to better understand the emerging issues and evolving priorities for disabled people in the next 5, 10 and 20 years. Foresight explores possible futures, and allows policy makers to predict and plan for possible future scenarios. It enables policy makers to consider issues other than those that are already known to be important.

12a. To what extent do you agree that DU should focus some of its evidence and insight work on anticipating future challenges for disabled people, rather than focusing solely on further exploring known needs?

12b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.
(Suggested maximum 500 words)

Final questions

Government is also interested in hearing your views on the plans and actions as a whole. In particular, DU is interested in hearing about additional or alternative actions that should be considered that would make a significant difference to the lives of disabled people.

13. What do you think of the plans and suggested areas of action described in this consultation as a whole?

Are these the right things for the government to be focusing on over the next year?

14. What alternative actions might the Government consider that would make a positive difference to the lives of disabled people?

Questionnaire: demographics

Part 1: About you

This section asks for information about you or your organisation. Demographic information will allow us to consider the responses of different groups, and to consider equality impacts in any future policy decisions.

1. Are you responding as an individual or an organisation? (Tick one box)

- ☐ Individual (please go to Section A)
- ☐ Organisation (please go to Section B)

Section A: Questionnaire for individuals

2. a. Which of the following descriptions do you identify with? (Tick all boxes that apply)

- ☐ Disabled
- ☐ Neurodiverse
- ☐ d/Deaf
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

b. Do you identify as having conditions or illnesses that affect you in any of the following areas? (Tick all boxes that apply)

- ☐ Vision (for example blindness or partial sight)
- ☐ Hearing (for example deafness or partial hearing)
- ☐ Mobility (for example walking short distances or climbing stairs)
- ☐ Dexterity (for example lifting and carrying objects, using a keyboard)
- ☐ Learning or understanding or concentrating
- ☐ Memory
- ☐ Mental health (for example depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder)
- ☐ Stamina or breathing or fatigue
- ☐ Socially or behaviourally (for example autism spectrum disorder (ASD) which includes Asperger's, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD))
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other _____

3. Where do you mostly work? If you are currently not in work, please indicate where you live most of the time. (Tick one box)

- ☐ England
- ☐ Northern Ireland
- ☐ Scotland
- ☐ Wales
- ☐ Other _____

4. What is your ethnicity? Please choose the option that best describes your ethnic group or background. (Tick one box)

White

- ☐ English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British
- ☐ Irish
- ☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ☐ Roma
- ☐ Any other white background

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

- ☐ White and black Caribbean
- ☐ White and black African
- ☐ White and Asian
- ☐ Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background

Asian or Asian British

- ☐ Bangladeshi
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Pakistani
- ☐ Any other Asian background

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

- ☐ Caribbean
- ☐ African
- ☐ Any other black, black British, Caribbean or African background

Other ethnic groups

- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Other ethnic group _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

5. What is your religion? (Tick one box)

- ☐ No religion
- ☐ Christian (Including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ Any other religion _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

6. How old are you? (Tick one box)

- ☐ under 18
- ☐ 18 to 24 years
- ☐ 25 to 34 years
- ☐ 35 to 44 years
- ☐ 45 to 54 years
- ☐ 55 to 65 years
- ☐ Over 65 years
- ☐ Prefer not to say

7. What is your sex? (We will ask about gender next) (Tick one box)

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say

8. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (Tick one box)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, enter gender identity _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

9. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation? (Tick one box)

- ☐ Straight or heterosexual
- ☐ Gay or lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Other sexual orientation _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

10. What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were about aged 14? This question provides an indication of socio-economic background. (Tick one box)

- ☐ Modern professional and traditional professional occupations such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer, accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil or mechanical engineer
- ☐ Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators such as: finance manager, chief executive, large business owner, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager
- ☐ Clerical and intermediate occupations such as: secretary, personal assistant, call centre agent, clerical worker, nursery nurse
- ☐ Technical and craft occupations such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver
- ☐ Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant, HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter or waitress, bar staff
- ☐ Long-Term Unemployed (claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year)
- ☐ Small business owners who employed less than 25 people such as: corner shop owners, small plumbing companies, retail shop owner, single restaurant or cafe owner, taxi owner, garage owner
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other _____

Section B: Questionnaire for organisations

- 1.** What type of organisations or networks does your response represent? (Tick all boxes that apply)

☐ Disabled People's Organisation (DPO)

☐ Charity

☐ Social enterprise

☐ Trade union

☐ Private organisation or business

☐ Umbrella organisation

☐ Other _____

- 2. a.** Whose views does your organisation or network represent? Please state whether members are individuals or organisations. (Tick one box)

☐ Individuals

☐ Organisations

- b.** How many members does your organisation or network represent? (Tick one box)

☐ 1 to 24

☐ 25 to 249

☐ 250 to 999

☐ 1000+

- 3.** Where does your organisation or network operate? (Tick one box)

☐ England

☐ Wales

☐ Scotland

☐ Northern Ireland

☐ England and Wales

☐ Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland)

☐ UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland)

☐ International (UK and other countries)

☐ Other _____

4. What is your role in the organisation? (Tick one box)

- ☐ CEO or equivalent
- ☐ Head of network
- ☐ Trade Union representative
- ☐ HR professional
- ☐ Policy or research professional
- ☐ Comms or campaigns or external affairs professional
- ☐ Diversity and Inclusion professional
- ☐ Other _____

Contact details and how to respond

For information about how we treat your personal data when you respond to our consultation, please see the **Privacy Notice at Annex A**.

Please send your response by 06/10/2023 to:

Disability Action Plan team, Disability Unit, Cabinet Office,
Ground Floor,
10 Victoria Street,
London,
SW1H 0NB

Tel number: 08081756420

Email: disabilityactionplan@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Complaints or comments

If you have any complaints or comments about the consultation process you should contact the Cabinet Office at the above address.

Extra copies

Further paper copies of this consultation can be obtained from disabilityactionplan@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

It is also available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/disability-action-plan-2023-to-2024>.

Alternative format versions of this publication can be requested from:

Disability Action Plan team, Disability Unit, Cabinet Office,
Ground Floor,
10 Victoria Street,
London,
SW1H 0NB

Tel: 08081756420

Email: disabilityactionplan@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Confidentiality

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. We will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Cabinet Office.

Annex A – Privacy Notice for Cabinet Office consultations

This notice sets out how we will use your personal data, and your rights. It is made under Articles 13 and or 14 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

YOUR DATA

Purpose

The purpose for which we are processing your personal data is to obtain the opinions of members of the public, parliamentarians and representatives of organisations and companies about departmental policies, proposals, or generally to obtain public opinion data on an issue of public interest.

The data

We will process the following personal data: name, address, email address, job title (where given), and employer (where given), as well as opinions.

We will also process additional biographical information about respondents or third parties where it is volunteered.

Legal basis of processing

The legal basis for processing your personal data is that it is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the data controller. In this case that is consulting on departmental policies or proposals, or obtaining opinion data, in order to develop good effective policies.

Sensitive personal data is personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation.

The legal basis for processing your sensitive personal data, or data about criminal convictions (where you volunteer it), is that it is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest for the exercise of a function of the Crown, a Minister of the Crown, or a government department. The function is consulting on departmental policies or proposals, or obtaining opinion data, in order to develop good effective policies.

Recipients

Where individuals submit responses, we may publish their responses, but we will not publicly identify them. We will endeavour to remove any information that may lead to individuals being identified.

Responses submitted by organisations or representatives of organisations may be published in full.

Where information about responses is not published, it may be shared with officials within other public bodies in order to help develop policy.

As your personal data will be stored on our IT infrastructure it will also be shared with our data processors who provide email, and document management and storage services.

We may share your personal data where required to be law, for example in relation to a request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Retention

Published information will generally be retained indefinitely on the basis that the information is of historic value. This would include, for example, personal data about representatives of organisations.

Responses from individuals will be retained in identifiable form for three calendar years after the consultation has concluded.

Where personal data have not been obtained from you

Your personal data were obtained by us from a respondent to a consultation.

YOUR RIGHTS

You have the right to request information about how your personal data are processed, and to request a copy of that personal data.

You have the right to request that any inaccuracies in your personal data are rectified without delay.

You have the right to request that any incomplete personal data are completed, including by means of a supplementary statement.

You have the right to request that your personal data are erased if there is no longer a justification for them to be processed.

You have the right in certain circumstances (for example, where accuracy is contested) to request that the processing of your personal data is restricted.

You have the right to object to the processing of your personal data where it is processed for direct marketing purposes.

You have the right to object to the processing of your personal data.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSFERS

As your personal data is stored on our IT infrastructure, and shared with our data processors, it may be transferred and stored securely outside the European Union. Where that is the case it will be subject to equivalent legal protection through the use of Model Contract Clauses.

CONTACT DETAILS

The data controller for your personal data is the Cabinet Office. The contact details for the data controller are:

Cabinet Office,
70 Whitehall,
London,
SW1A 2AS,
or 0207 276 1234, or publiccorrespondence@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

The contact details for the data controller's Data Protection Officer are:

Data Protection Officer,
Cabinet Office,
70 Whitehall,
London,
SW1A 2AS
or dpo@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

The Data Protection Officer provides independent advice and monitoring of Cabinet Office's use of personal information.

COMPLAINTS

If you consider that your personal data has been misused or mishandled, you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner, who is an independent regulator.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF
or 0303 123 1113, or casework@ico.org.uk.

Any complaint to the Information Commissioner is without prejudice to your right to seek redress through the courts.

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