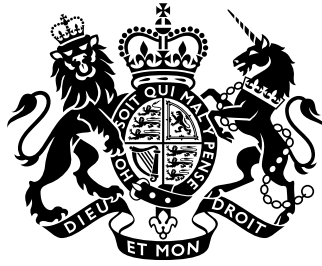




Cabinet Office

Disability Action Plan



Disability Action Plan

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

February 2024



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ISBN 978-1-5286-4675-8

E03061238 02/24

Printed on paper containing 40% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by HH Associates Ltd. on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office

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Ministerial foreword



This government is determined to transform the everyday lives and experiences of disabled people for the better.

Over 1 in 5 people in the UK are disabled. We want to tackle the barriers that prevent disabled people from fully benefiting from and engaging in our society. That means making this country the most accessible place in the world for disabled people to live, work and thrive.

To achieve this, we are working closely and collaboratively with disabled people and disability stakeholders.

Whether it's hearing from the Disabled People's Organisations Forum England, the Disability Charities Consortium and the Regional Stakeholder Network about their members' concerns and priorities, visiting state-of-the-art initiatives with the Disability and Access Ambassadors, working with the British Sign Language (BSL) Advisory Board on issues affecting BSL users, or talking with individuals or small groups at meetings, visits and events, we have made it a priority to learn directly from disabled people. Disabled people know better than anyone else what matters most to them.

This approach lies at the heart of everything we do. It has shaped the development of this Action Plan, and is central to how we will take actions forward – by working collaboratively with disabled people, amplifying their voices, and taking action to embed disability-inclusive approaches on the issues that disabled people care about most.

Just over a year ago, to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the government announced that we were going to develop a new Disability Action Plan, setting out the immediate actions the government would take in 2023 and 2024 to improve disabled people's lives.

And we wanted to give everyone – particularly disabled people, disabled people's organisations and other interested parties – the chance to have their say. That is why we published the draft plan in July 2023 alongside the accessible consultation.

In the draft plan, we shared our proposals for 12 areas where we felt that we could take immediate action to improve disabled people's everyday lives, or to lay the foundations of longer term change.

As we said at the time, that consultation was not meant to be the end of a journey. Rather, it was a first step – and a chance to make sure that we were heading in the right direction.

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Over the course of the consultation, over 1,300 people shared their thoughts with us. I'm immensely grateful to every single person who took the time to respond to the consultation, whether by answering the questions online or sending in their thoughts by email, phone or post. We are publishing an independent analysis of those responses today alongside this plan.

I would also like to thank all of those who gave their time to attend one or more of the many events we held throughout the consultation period, and to share their invaluable insights.

Every response – every comment, thought and suggestion – has helped us to shape and strengthen the final Disability Action Plan so that it can achieve the greatest possible impact.

Having taken the time to listen, to discuss and to engage, we are now moving straight to action. I am determined that we will deliver every one of these proposals.

To track our progress, we will publish 2 updates to Parliament and on GOV.UK after 6 months and 12 months.

We know that disabled people face barriers across many areas of their lives. It is therefore vital that we continue to take concerted action across the government to improve disabled people's lives and ensure disabled people can participate fully in society.

From support with the cost of living through [Help for Households](#), to plans for education through the [SEND and alternative provision improvement plan](#), from reforms to employment and welfare through the [Transforming Support: Health and Disability White Paper](#) and the [Back to Work Plan](#), to strategies to improve health and social care through the [People at the Heart of Care White Paper](#) and the development of the new [British Sign Language \(BSL\) GCSE](#), there is already significant work being taken forward across government in areas that disabled people have told us are a priority.

Over the last few years, this government has delivered real improvements for disabled people. We have supported the passage of 2 landmark pieces of legislation, the British Sign Language (BSL) 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 and launched an online advice hub on employment rights for disabled people.

We have improved the Access to Work programme, introduced a new Passenger Assist app supporting thousands of rail users and strengthened the Victims' Code with enhanced entitlements for disabled people. We 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, and made the King Charles III England Coast Path as easy as possible for disabled people to use – over 2,260 miles of the path have now been approved, with 1040 miles open.

And we have seen 1.3 million more disabled people in work now than in 2017 – delivering a government commitment 5 years early.

This Disability Action Plan will complement this work, delivering real improvements to disabled people's everyday lives.

I look forward to working with my colleagues across government, the Ministerial Disability Champions, to drive progress on the immediate areas of action in the plan as well as on the complementary commitments in the National Disability Strategy, which sets out the long-term vision, and other long-term reform programmes across government.

There is no time to waste. As this plan sets out, we will take immediate action now, and in the coming months, to achieve real, tangible improvements for disabled people.

Together, we can unlock opportunities so that more disabled people can reach their potential, and change disabled people's lives for the better.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mims', written in a cursive style.

Mims Davies MP

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work

Executive summary

In the UK, more than 1 in 5 people are disabled. This government wants to make this country the most accessible place in the world for disabled people to live, work and thrive, addressing and removing the barriers which prevent them from reaching their full potential.

We have developed this new Disability Action Plan to complement:

- the [National Disability Strategy](#) which sets out the long-term vision to transform disabled people's lives for the better
- other significant UK Government reform programmes and specific work to continuously improve equal access to opportunities, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

It sets out the immediate actions the government will take in the coming year to improve disabled people's everyday lives. It also lays the foundations for longer-term change.

Throughout the 12 week consultation we received over 1,300 responses, and spoke with many more people across the UK at consultation events. The final actions in this plan have been shaped by the thoughts, experiences and insights of everyone who responded to our consultation or came to an event.

Proposals in the consultation

The [Disability Action Plan 2023 to 2024: consultation document](#) described:

- work already underway or completed across government over the last 12 months
- planned work in each government department in the next 18 months and beyond

The consultation then asked for views on 12 proposed areas for action led or co-ordinated by the Disability Unit (DU), part of the Cabinet Office. DU was set up to work across government to break down the barriers faced by disabled people in the UK.

Proposals in the consultation document were grouped into 4 broad categories:

- improving disability inclusion in existing government policies
- new actions focused on the specific needs of disabled people
- improving cross-government collaboration
- strengthening the evidence base

Finally, the consultation asked 2 more questions. The first was about people's views on the plan as a whole. The second asked what else the government could do to make a positive difference to the lives of disabled people.

Main themes in people's feedback

The following 7 themes ran through many people's responses to the consultation. We have amended our proposals in line with these themes wherever possible:

- policies should be informed by disabled people's experiences
- clear, measurable actions are needed, with clear accountability
- consideration of disabled people's financial circumstances and the cost of living
- sufficient funding for specific actions
- ensure the inclusion of all disabled people
- improved and accessible communications about government services and resources
- equality of opportunity for disabled and non-disabled people

Areas of action

This chapter sets out 32 actions, across 14 different areas. The government will take these forward with disabled people, their organisations, and other government departments and public service providers.

The consultation findings have helped us to shape these actions. We have revised or removed some of the proposals in the consultation, and added several new proposals.

As a result, the government is committed to working with disabled people, their organisations and other partners in the coming year to:

1. Support disabled people who want to be elected to public office
2. Include disabled people's needs in emergency and resilience planning
3. Include disabled people's needs in climate-related policies
4. Improve information and outcomes for families in which someone is disabled
5. Make playgrounds more accessible
6. Help businesses understand the needs of and deliver improvements for disabled people
7. Explore if the UK could host the Special Olympics World Summer Games
8. Support people who have guide and assistance dogs
9. Help the government measure how effective its policies and services are for disabled people
10. Research issues facing disabled people in the future
11. Make government publications and communications more accessible
12. Improve understanding of the cost of living for disabled people
13. Promote better understanding of the UNCRPD across government
14. Monitor and report progress of the Disability Action Plan

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The last action sets out the government's plans to publish progress updates after 6 months and 12 months. These will be published in Parliament as written ministerial statements, and on GOV.UK. DU will also share the updates with their strategic stakeholder networks.

Introduction

This document sets out the immediate actions the government will take in the coming year to improve disabled people's lives. It also lays the foundations for longer-term change. This plan is part of the government's commitment to create a society that works for everyone, where everyone can take part and be fully included.

Many people in the UK are disabled (1 in 5). Disabled people share the same ambition to take part in society as non-disabled people, but often experience more barriers.

The [National Disability Strategy](#) sets out the long-term vision across the UK Government to reduce these barriers and transform disabled people's lives for the better. However, we want to go even further. We have therefore developed this new Disability Action Plan.

This plan sits alongside the National Disability Strategy and other significant reform programmes across government. Taken together, they show the breadth and depth of the government's commitment to improving disabled people's lives, now and for years to come. In this way, the UK Government also demonstrates its commitment to implementing the UNCRPD through its legislation, policies and services.

To ensure this plan focuses on the issues which matter most to disabled people, we ran a [consultation](#) from July to October 2023. The consultation received over 1,300 responses.

The insights, evidence and views gathered through this period have informed the development of the final plan.

This document will cover:

- themes from the consultation responses
- a summary of the responses to the proposals that were included in the consultation
- the final actions being taken forward in the Disability Action Plan

This plan is being published alongside an [independent report summarising findings from the consultation](#).

Geographical 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 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. The actions outlined will only be put in place in the countries where devolution agreements state that the UK Government retains ownership of the issue, or with the agreement of devolved administrations.

Contact details

This report is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-action-plan>.

Further copies of this report and the consultation paper can be obtained at the email or postal address below:

Email: disabilityactionplan@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Postal address:

Disability Action Plan team, Disability Unit, Cabinet Office
4th Floor, Home Zone 6
1 Horse Guards Road
London, SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 0808 1756420

Alternative accessible formats of this plan are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-action-plan>, and include:

- full-screen BSL video
- Welsh translation
- Easy Read
- large print
- web accessible PDF and HTML
- braille
- hard copy
- audio file

You can request Braille or hard copies by emailing: disabilityactionplan@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Complaints or comments

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

Main themes in people's feedback

The [Disability Action Plan 2023 to 2024: consultation document](#) (published 18 July 2023) described:

- work already underway or completed across the UK Government over the previous 12 months
- planned work in each UK Government department in the next 18 months and beyond to improve disabled people's lives
- 12 proposed areas for action in 4 broad categories:
 - improving disability inclusion in existing government policies
 - new actions focused on the specific needs of disabled people
 - improving cross-government collaboration
 - strengthening the evidence base

Finally, the consultation asked for:

- people's views on the plans as a whole
- suggestions for other actions the government should consider to improve disabled people's lives

The consultation ran from 18 July to 6 October 2023 and was available in a range of accessible formats. Responses were received by email, post, phone and online survey. Insights and evidence were also gathered through a series of events and meetings during the consultation period.

This chapter summarises the 7 main themes in the responses to the consultation questions. It highlights the main policy areas people identified as needing attention from the UK Government. This summary draws on the [Disability Action Plan independent findings report](#), as well as information gathered at events and meetings held during the consultation period.

Themes across the consultation

We found 7 themes running through people's responses to the consultation. These were particularly visible in responses to the question asking for views on the proposed action plan as a whole. We have amended our proposals in line with these themes where possible. This has led to 4 new areas of action. The themes have also helped us shape how we plan to fulfil the proposals we made in the consultation.

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1. Policies should be informed by disabled people's experiences

Respondents highlighted the need to involve disabled people in policy development and implementation. They said greater consideration of disabled people's experiences was vital in research, policy development and service delivery.

Because of this, we have revised some actions to set out more clearly how we will ensure that disabled people's voices and disabled people's experiences are amplified in the Disability Action Plan.

2. Clear, measurable actions with clear accountability

People consistently said how important it was that the action plan contain clear and measurable actions. They said accountability and timescales should be clear, and approaches centralised and joined-up.

As a result, we have made actions more specific and concrete where possible, allowing for greater accountability. We have also introduced a new action to provide updates on progress after 6 and 12 months.

3. Consideration of disabled people's financial circumstances and the cost of living

Respondents raised the issue of disabled people's financial circumstances, particularly in the context of the cost of living. They highlighted areas where rising costs were particularly affecting disabled people. They also asked for simpler approaches to getting financial support.

The government is already doing work on this outside of the Disability Action Plan. But we have also revised the plan where possible to take account of these findings. For example, by:

- bringing together information on a range of services for use by families with disabled members
- adding a new area of action on the impact of the cost of living on disabled people

4. Sufficient funding for specific actions

Consultation responses frequently mentioned that policies in the action plan needed adequate funding. Relatedly, respondents said increasing funding for services could resolve many issues faced by disabled people.

All actions within this plan have been included following assessments of how feasible they are to complete.

5. Ensure the inclusion of all disabled people

Many respondents said policy-making needed to recognise and respond to disabled people's diverse experiences and needs. There was a particular need to consider a full range of impairment types, including non-visible or learning disabilities.

Actions within this plan therefore consider a full range of impairments. Proactively involving and considering the needs of a wide range of disabled people, with a wide range of impairments, will support more inclusive approaches.

6. Improved and accessible communications about government services and resources

Respondents consistently highlighted the need for better and accessible government information and communications. There was also clear evidence that many people were not aware of work which is already underway. Other responses showed the need to provide information in ways that a wide range of disabled people find accessible.

As a result, we have included a new action on accessible, inclusive communications and resources. This commitment is led from the very top, with Number 10 making new commitments to further increase the use of British Sign Language (BSL). This aligns with wider work with the Government Communication Service and our networks across government to:

- increase the use of alternative formats where most appropriate
- make information more accessible
- increase and report on the use of BSL in central government's communications

7. Equality of opportunity for disabled and non-disabled people

Respondents supported measures that would increase equality for disabled people across all areas of life. Many focused on the need for inclusion and accessibility to be 'designed in' from the start. Some also highlighted potential areas to better support disabled people's rights by changing or enforcing legislation.

In every action area, we have considered how we can:

- bring disabled people's experience into the heart of policy making and implementation
- embed inclusive design

Where work is already underway, we are working with the relevant teams to bring disabled people into the conversation at strategic points for maximum impact. This will help make sure that actions within this plan lead to real improvements in equality for disabled people.

For a fuller explanation of these themes, please find the [independent analysis of the Disability Action Plan consultation](#), published on GOV.UK.

Views on the overall Disability Action Plan

The final 2 questions in the consultation asked people:

- for their views about the proposed plan as a whole
- what other actions they thought the UK Government should consider

Overall, respondents agreed that the actions set out in the consultation document should be taken forward. Many people provided essential insights that have fed into the themes set out above and been used to further develop the final proposals, and to suggest several new areas of action.

Many respondents criticised the short-term focus of the plan, highlighting the need for longer term action.

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However, the Disability Action Plan is only one means by which the government is taking action to improve the lives of disabled people. The action plan aims to set out immediate actions which can either be carried out before the end of this Parliament, or can make significant progress within that time period towards a longer term goal. This action plan sits alongside and complements:

- the [National Disability Strategy](#)
- wider reforms across government (as set out in Chapters 2 and 3 of the [Disability Action Plan consultation document](#))

Many of the areas highlighted by respondents where longer-term action is needed are already being addressed or considered either by work being taken forward in other government departments or through the [implementation of the National Disability Strategy](#). Consultation responses relating to these areas have therefore been shared with the relevant government departments so that those insights can be considered as those longer-term reform programmes are taken forward.

These areas included: accessibility in transport and the built environment, financial support, employment and workplace support, health and social care, informal support, education, and disability or accessibility-related legislation.

For example, within the area of employment, several respondents and attendees of consultation events highlighted the Disability Employment Charter. Several commitments in the National Disability Strategy relate closely to the charter, including DU's commitment to publish the findings of a consultation and next steps on [Disability Workforce Reporting](#). Action in this area is therefore not included in this action plan, but is being taken forward through other ongoing work. For a fuller overview of the UK Government's work to better support disabled people, see chapters 2 and 3 of the [Disability Action Plan consultation document](#) and the [National Disability Strategy](#).

Areas of action

This chapter sets out the actions that the government will take forward over the coming year with disabled people, their organisations, and other government departments and public service providers.

These actions take into consideration the consultation findings, using information gathered through written responses (see the [Disability Action Plan independent findings report](#)) and numerous events and engagement activity. We have revised or removed some of the proposals in the consultation, and added several new proposals.

DU is committed to working with disabled people, their organisations and other partners on these actions in the coming year.

Support disabled people who want to be elected to public office

Disabled people make up 22% of the population but are underrepresented in political and public life. 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 see themselves represented at the highest levels of public life. Disabled people should be supported both to access, and to remain in, public office. 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](#). The findings of our consultation reinforced this need.

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. The government provided some financial support in the past, such as the [Access to Elected Office Fund](#), which ran between 2012 and 2015. While this funding gave valuable support to some disabled candidates, more effective and longer-term solutions are needed.

In the consultation, DU proposed to review the funding available for reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates. The aim of this would have been to identify long-term solutions. DU also proposed setting up a GOV.UK webpage to signpost guidance and training.

Summary of consultation findings

92% of written responses agreed that the government should better support disabled people to access elected office. At consultation events, disabled experts said centralised financial support was needed. It was suggested that this funding was needed as soon as possible. Suggestions were also made around how a new fund might be designed.

The importance of increasing the representation of disabled people in elected office is clear. The financial and accessibility-related barriers are also clear. Through this consultation we have heard that the current approach is not providing the financial support that some disabled candidates need. We have also heard from people who have stood for or been elected to office that our proposal did not go far or fast enough.

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Responses to the proposal to create an online hub were generally favourable. Some respondents, however, did not believe this to be a priority. Most respondents highlighted the need for any new hub to be accessible. This included providing non-digital options for people with low digital literacy or no internet access. Consultation responses also highlighted the need to ensure that workplaces for those elected to public office are accessible, and that disabled people in elected office have the support and flexibility they need after they are elected.

In consultation events in particular, attendees said actions to make workplaces, buildings and processes more accessible should take priority, alongside work to establish a fund.

Improving the representation of disabled people in elected office is not just about supporting disabled people to get elected. It is also vital to ensure that disabled people are properly supported to stay in post. This applies both to those who were already disabled when they were elected, and to those who became disabled afterwards.

The House of Commons and Parliamentary Digital Service's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2023-27 includes plans for improvements over the next 4 years. 1 of its 3 key areas of focus is 'Improving Accessibility'. This area includes 3 actions:

- improve physical accessibility
- strengthen the focus on digital accessibility
- strengthen disability confidence and competence in delivering services for colleagues and customers

Work to make these improvements has already started.

Work at the local level is ongoing through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). DLUHC has 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

As well as supporting the House of Commons, DU will start work to design a new way to provide funding for disabled people seeking elected office. This will help to establish a new, long-term approach to help with the extra financial costs associated with disability when standing for elected office. We will not develop an information hub over the coming year, but will review the case for this in the longer term.

In the meantime, while this work is underway, DU will develop and publish new guidance by summer 2024 on how political parties and elected public bodies can best support disabled candidates, drawing on lessons from the Local Government Association's work in this area and other sources. This will help to improve support in the short term while we establish a new long-term approach.

Together with the work already taking place at the local level, these actions will support both the recruitment and retention of disabled people in elected office.

Action 1: DU will work with disabled people to design a new way to provide financial support for disabled people to access elected office. This will be launched in 2025.

We will work in collaboration with disabled people with a range of experience of elected office. We will ensure diverse representation across impairment types and backgrounds.

Action 2: As a first step, DU will develop and publish new guidance by summer 2024 on how political parties and elected public bodies can best support disabled candidates, drawing on lessons from the Local Government Association's work in this area and other sources.

Action 3: DU will work alongside the House of Commons to support implementation of disability-related actions where possible.

Include disabled people's needs in emergency and resilience planning

Emergency and resilience 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)

This planning work helps organisations and governments to reduce harm in these difficult situations. It aims to prepare for these types of risks and help tackle challenges before they become dangerous issues. It also tries to make sure that everyone who can is able to take action in emergencies to help themselves or others.

Research shows that emergency situations can be experienced differently by disabled people. Government departments already consider disabled people's needs in emergency and resilience planning, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. But disabled people and stakeholders say their needs are still not fully considered. Our consultation findings confirm that this view is widespread.

In the consultation, DU proposed to help make emergency planning and resilience work more inclusive. It would do this through greater engagement with disabled people's organisations (DPOs). This would help disabled people's voices to be heard more clearly.

Summary of consultation findings

This proposal had some of the highest support from both individuals and organisations. 96% of respondents agreed with it. Respondents highlighted the importance of ensuring that disabled people's interests are properly reflected in emergency and resilience planning. They also called for practical actions based on the experiences of disabled people. People at consultation events said that public health and emergency planning information was not

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accessible to all disabled people. They were also concerned about the lack of consistent national guidance on minimum standards for local authorities to make sure plans are inclusive of disabled people.

Respondents called for greater recognition of disabled people's specific needs. They emphasised that disability-inclusive emergency planning must not be an afterthought. Instead, it should learn from previous events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Grenfell Tower fire. During the pandemic, including during lockdowns, many disabled people felt that access to public health information, healthcare, medicines, and other essentials had worsened for them.

Respondents said there should be better protection for disabled people in future emergencies. They recommended increased support and mandatory protocols. Examples suggested include fire alarms with visual displays, touch-based signage to evacuation points, and evacuation plans that include disabled people. The need for more disability inclusion in local and national planning was another strong theme. Some respondents also suggested updating UK guidance to follow existing international guidelines.

DU will therefore work with government emergency and resilience teams to make their planning more inclusive of disabled people.

Action 4: The Cabinet Office Resilience Directorate will ensure that disabled people's experiences are reflected in resilience planning. It will do this by inviting a disabled people's organisation representative to attend the UK Resilience Forum.

We will also enable disabled people (via DPOs and other disability representatives across impairment types) to contribute to UK Government guidance to Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) on supporting 'vulnerable' people in an emergency.

Action 5: DU will build relationships with emergency and resilience planners across government. This will help to strengthen knowledge and understanding of disability-inclusive practices in emergency and resilience work.

Action 6: The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work will lead a discussion with the Ministerial Disability Champions on the importance of accessible communications. A focus area will be to improve accessible communications and information about resilience and emergencies.

Include disabled people's needs in climate-related policies

The government has committed to reaching net zero by 2050. We need to make sure that work to meet this target reflects disabled people's needs. For example, new Clean Air Zones (CAZ) and the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) have affected some disabled people's lives, preventing them from travelling easily to work, hospital, school or leisure activities, and leading to some disabled people feeling excluded from city centres and across London.

It is also important that the needs of disabled people are fully balanced when creating such schemes. The UK is home to leading academics and experts in both climate action and disability inclusion and there is a need, confirmed by consultation findings, for more action in this area.

Growth in green industries offers opportunities for increased employment. The UK Government supports the Green Jobs Taskforce's recommendation that industry should prioritise making sure that people from all backgrounds can work in green jobs, building on existing good practice.

As part of the Green Jobs Delivery Group's work, government, industry, academia and others are working to agree a set of actions which will be included in the Green Jobs Plan, which will be published in the first half of 2024. Among broader actions, this will include considering how to support more disabled people to bring their experience to the green workforce.

In the [Green Jobs Delivery Group and Power and Networks Workforce Task and Finish Group's](#) summer update in July 2023, the Department for Work and Pensions committed that during 2023 to 24 they will work with industry to map sector engagement with, for example, the Disability Confident scheme and other opportunities, to identify and act where improvements in visibility are needed.

In the consultation, the government set out proposals to ensure that climate-related policies better consider disabled people's needs.

Summary of consultation findings

Around 83% of consultation respondents agreed with this proposal. People at consultation events thought national climate strategies and local climate action failed to include disabled people. Their recommendations included:

- making better connections between people working on climate issues and social justice issues
- making complex issues around climate action more accessible to different audiences

Data and research gaps were also highlighted. These make it harder to understand or reduce the impact of climate change on disabled people.

Responses highlighted several important issues, including:

- accessible public and private transport
- accessible electric vehicles and charging points
- exemptions from ULEZ and CAZ for Blue Badge holders
- accessible and non-discriminatory recycling processes
- well insulated and ventilated housing for disabled people

Other issues highlighted in consultation responses include:

- the extra costs related to climate adaptations, which could affect disabled people more than non-disabled people
- the importance of disabled people's experience in climate planning work across government

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- the need for accessible, jargon-free communications and information on climate adaptations

A high proportion of respondents said the infrastructure for electric vehicles was inaccessible. The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) is working to ensure that charging infrastructure supports increasing the proportion of electric cars in the UK. This includes working with industry and other parties to effectively implement the Publicly Available Standard 1899 for accessible public electric vehicle charging. To aid this, a review of the standard and progress on implementation is being kicked off by the British Standards Institution (BSI) in December 2023, supported by OZEV and Motability, which will report in mid-2025 with its recommendations.

DU will therefore work on actions to increase disability inclusion in climate adaptation and mitigation actions. This will complement the work already underway.

Action 7: DU will explore how to ensure that ULEZ and CAZ better consider the needs of disabled people. It will do this together with disabled people, other experts and relevant government departments.

Action 8: DU will bring together academics, disabled people and decision makers for a conference on climate adaptation and disability.

Action 9: DU will work closely with strategic teams across national government to increase awareness of disability inclusion in existing policies.

This will include teams within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Action 10: DU will carry out a systematic analysis to better understand the information and data that policy makers and disabled people need to make climate adaptations disability inclusive.

As part of this, DU will look for opportunities to fill data and information gaps, and make data more available and accessible.

Action 11: DU will set up a disabled people's experience panel for 2024 to support the cross-government work (action 9) and research development (action 10). The panel will include people with a range of impairment types and experiences, and from different locations.

Improve information and outcomes for families in which someone is disabled

Research shows that disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN) have a higher risk of negative experiences affecting their wellbeing and opportunities throughout their lives. There is very little data on disabled parents' experiences, so we wanted to learn more about these through the consultation. We could then identify useful actions to address them.

Families in which someone is disabled can experience very different challenges depending on whether a family member is born with an impairment, or becomes disabled later in childhood, adolescence or adulthood. We want to understand these challenges better so that everyone can receive the best possible support, whatever their situation.

In the consultation, DU set out proposed actions to improve outcomes for disabled children and disabled parents by establishing new cross-government task forces.

Summary of consultation findings

Responses to these proposals were very positive. But many people highlighted the need for a 'whole-family' approach to provide the best support. Because of this, we have brought together our proposals for disabled children and disabled parents into a single area. A strong theme in consultation events was the need to bring the voices of disabled children, disabled parents and young carers into policy-making.

Responses to the proposals to better support **disabled children** showed high levels of support for the 4 proposed areas of focus:

- 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

Some respondents suggested other transitions, for example:

- from nursery to primary school
- to adult support services

Respondents also said some public spaces needed to be made more accessible and inclusive. These included public toilets, concerts, playgrounds, public housing, schools, gyms and swimming pools.

Some respondents said the door-to-door transport journey as a whole was important. They highlighted the impact of inaccessible public transport on wellbeing and social opportunities. Others raised the impact of bullying on mental health, and suggested a focus on addressing bullying within schools.

Respondents highlighted issues around diagnosis, including:

- the importance of early diagnosis for accessing suitable support
- disparities in diagnosis
- support being affected by waiting times for diagnosis

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- inflexibility in eligibility criteria – for example, 3 to 5 year olds being prevented from receiving mobility equipment

Other points raised included:

- specific initiatives like increasing access to respite care and short breaks, and better provision of communications support such as free BSL lessons
- ensuring support is provided in partnership with families
- streamlining application processes for support
- making information about support available in one, accessible place

Responses to proposals to better support **disabled parents** also showed strong support for the 3 proposed areas of focus:

- accessibility issues in parenting support from health and care services
- difficulties experienced within the family courts and child protection
- domestic abuse

Many respondents highlighted the importance of:

- suitable and accessible communication support
- wider support networks, such as groups of other disabled parents, family-centred support, or play groups

Respondents made suggestions to address the challenges disabled parents face in health and social care including:

- giving them a key worker
- addressing attitudes that lead disabled parents to “go above and beyond” non-disabled parents to prove their parenting abilities
- ensuring that professionals working with disabled parents had enhanced awareness and training

Respondents highlighted communication barriers and structural inaccessibility in family courts – for example, a lack of parking and poor transport links. Better access to reasonable adjustments before and during court hearings was raised. This is to allow for the full participation and representation of disabled parents.

Respondents suggested making support services (including refuges) easier to find for disabled parents facing domestic abuse. They also suggested better domestic abuse training for staff within services used by disabled parents.

Considerable work is already underway across the UK Government to address issues raised in this section of the consultation. This includes:

- production of the newly updated [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) guidance
- the development of new Transition Guides to assist disabled young people across all stages of education and post-16 settings
- work to raise awareness of bullying and its impact on disabled children, and to better support young carers

- implementation of the [SEND and alternative provision improvement plan](#)
- work on the [Stable Homes, Built on Love plan](#) to improve children's social care, and requesting the Law Commission to review all legislation relating to the provision of social care to disabled children
- plans to improve the accessibility of public transport and train stations
- the [Victims and Prisoners Bill](#), currently going through its parliamentary stages
- work to implement recommendations in the [Safe Care at Home Review](#)
- continuing to rollout the [Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism](#) to the health and social care workforce.

To best support this work and fill some remaining gaps, DU will take forward actions 12 to 15 in 2024.

Action 12: A disabled people's experience panel drawn from existing networks of disabled people's organisations will work with DU and other partners on initiatives to address a number of issues raised in this consultation where there is opportunity to make a difference in the short term. This includes supporting actions 13 to 15, embedding disabled people's experience in the products created.

This panel will be made up of disabled parents and guardians, disabled children, and carers (including young carers) to amplify their voices. It will include representation across impairment types, and will involve people born with impairments and people who acquire impairments at different life stages.

Action 13: DU will explore and develop a new, accessible online information hub for families with disabled members. This will make it easier for them to find resources and information about government policies.

This work complements work led by DfE to roll out 'Family Hubs'.

Action 14: DU will work with partners to develop new products addressing specific issues experienced by families with disabled members. These include:

- a guide for local authorities to support more constructive relationships with disabled parents
- a training module supporting education professionals to identify young and sibling carers
- improved signposting to existing anti-bullying training for teachers and teaching assistants, including resources on the impact of bullying on disabled children and how to identify it

The families disabled people's experience panel will consider other products that might be needed and could be developed in the near future.

Action 15: DU will lead work to improve the evidence base on disability and domestic abuse. It will do this with disabled people, DPOs, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, domestic abuse sector (including by and for organisations), the Home Office and other relevant partners.

This work will consider the experiences of a wide range of disabled people with different impairment types.

Make playgrounds more accessible

The accessibility of playgrounds differs significantly, meaning that disabled children and children with disabled family members are not always able to use the playgrounds in their local areas. DU wants to make it as easy as possible for local authorities to make the playgrounds they build or refurbish accessible. Accessibility features include even ground, accessible play equipment and sufficiently wide pathways.

There is already useful information on disability inclusion in organised sports, physical activity and exercise – for example, the guidance on accessible sports facilities produced by Sport England. However, stakeholders in this area say a lot of expertise specifically on accessible playgrounds has been lost in recent years. Guidance on accessible playgrounds comes from many different sources. It can be hard to find as it is not available in one place.

In the consultation, DU proposed to improve playground accessibility by:

- creating an online hub of accessible playground guidance on GOV.UK
- working with partners to raise awareness among local authorities

DU also proposed to explore whether the government should make it a legal requirement for playground refurbishments to meet existing accessibility standards.

Summary of consultation findings

The consultation findings showed high levels of support for these proposals. 92% of respondents agreed with the proposal to create an online guidance hub. 93% thought that guidance should be a legal requirement. These views were supported by disabled people and some service providers at consultation events.

Further issues highlighted include:

- the importance of inclusivity as well as accessibility
- the need to ensure playgrounds have equipment that caters to all disabilities
- the importance of the wider area being accessible, including pathways, car parks and toilets
- the importance of work in this area being informed by disabled people's experience

It was also suggested that the online hub have a postcode search function. This would allow parents of disabled children to see if a playground was suitable for their children.

DU will therefore take forward work to:

- build an accessible information hub
- explore new guidance on playground accessibility

Action 16: DU will create an online hub of information for local authorities on creating accessible playgrounds.

The new families disabled people’s experience panel will support the hub’s development. For example, it will review potential guidance and highlight any information gaps. This could include using the hub to promote opportunities for disabled children to get involved in inclusive physical activity – for example, by linking to information about inclusive community sports.

Action 17: DU will explore the most effective way of creating guidance on how to develop more inclusive and accessible playgrounds. This is with a view to developing and publishing such guidance, so that more children, young people and families can enjoy accessible playgrounds in their local area.

We will work closely with the families disabled people’s experience panel, local authorities, playground equipment and facilities providers, and other organisations with expertise in this area.

Help businesses to understand the needs and deliver improvements for disabled people

The National Disability Strategy set out this government’s intention to improve our understanding of disabled people’s experiences in accessing products and services in the private sector. Research shows that disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to experience difficulties and barriers accessing products and services.

Building on this commitment, DU proposed in the consultation to develop a ‘Disability Enabled Badge’. This would be awarded to businesses that trained their staff in disability awareness. Disabled customers could use this to identify businesses with a greater awareness of disability and accessibility issues. This proposed scheme would be voluntary, with training paid for by the businesses and services that take part.

This work will sit alongside ongoing improvements to the Disability Confident scheme. Disability Confident aims to provide employers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to attract, recruit, retain and develop disabled people in the workplace. The new scheme would have different aims and audiences – focusing specifically on improving the experiences of disabled customers. Though very different, both schemes seek better outcomes for disabled people in the world of work, business and customer experience.

Summary of consultation findings

84% of respondents agreed that work in this area would be beneficial. But organisations were much less likely than individuals to ‘strongly agree’ with the proposal. There was general agreement with the aim of the proposal in consultation responses and events. But some people and organisations thought more exploratory work would be helpful.

There were some issues raised about the scheme’s proposed name, ‘Disability Enabled Badge’. Some evidence suggested that people misunderstood how the scheme would work. Some respondents also questioned if training was the right way to improve customer experiences for disabled people. This work should address environmental and organisational barriers, not only attitudinal ones.

Other responses highlighted concerns about:

- how effective the scheme would be if it was not mandatory
- the need for monitoring of the scheme to ensure its impact
- the risk of duplication with existing schemes

In response to the consultation findings, DU will take forward work to help businesses to understand the needs of and make improvements for disabled people, but will not use the name “Disability Enabled Badge”. First, DU will focus on defining the problem. This will allow us to:

- address the main issues raised
- better understand evidence gaps
- explore existing schemes to reduce the risk of duplication

We will engage with the disability sector throughout this process. Once complete, we will be better placed to develop policy options to address the barriers faced by disabled customers and improve customer experiences for disabled people.

Action 18: DU will publish research into the accessibility of private sector products and services in spring 2024. This will provide more information about the accessibility of different sectors (including retail and leisure) and the end-to-end customer journey for disabled people.

Action 19: DU will work to further understand issues such as:

- **existing training schemes and their success for disabled consumers and businesses**
- **whether and how disability awareness training adds value to organisations and improves consumer experience**
- **the end-to-end customer journey, exploring how a scheme could address accessibility across sectors**
- **whether disabled people are aware of their rights and know how to enforce them**

This work will consider the needs of a wide range of disabled people with different impairment types.

Explore if the UK could host the Special Olympics World Summer Games

The Special Olympics is a global movement that aims to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with a learning disability. It provides a visible platform from which to address inactivity, stigma, isolation and injustice. It also gives people with a learning disability opportunities to:

- develop physical fitness
- experience and take part in sport
- build confidence and lasting friendships with other athletes and within the wider community

The Special Olympics World Summer Games are the organisation's flagship event. They take place every 4 years and attract competitors from around the world.

Previous hosts of the World Summer Games have reported a significant positive return on investment for partners. The Games have helped to grow and support communities and build sustainable legacies for people with a learning disability. They have also helped to challenge stigma and build opportunities for inclusion.

Hosting the Games would provide a real opportunity to create positive changes that would benefit people across the UK by showcasing the talent of people with a learning disability as world class athletes. It could form part of a wider movement across government and society to transform the lives of people with a learning disability, like the London 2012 Paralympic Games did for those with physical disabilities. It would also build on the government's new sport strategy, [Get Active](#), which places tackling disparities in activity levels at its heart.

As a first step towards realising that opportunity, in the consultation DU proposed to commission a feasibility report into hosting the Games in 2031, with the support of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), considering the widest potential benefits for the UK.

Summary of consultation findings

75% of respondents agreed with the proposal to explore the feasibility of bidding to host the Special Olympics Summer Games in Great Britain. Respondents said the feasibility study should consider all elements of hosting a major sporting event. This includes exploring the potential for long-term improvements that would give disabled people better access to sport and physical activity.

Some respondents questioned whether the event would lead to long-term positive change for disabled people. Others asked if the money spent on the Games could be better spent to support a wider group of disabled people. For example, it could help to:

- increase funding for grassroots sports initiatives for all disabled people
- address more structural barriers to people with a learning disability taking part in sport

But many respondents highlighted the potential for this event to raise awareness of learning disabilities and empower athletes with a learning disability. They noted that large-scale events can help to raise the profile of learning disabilities by showcasing talent and encouraging others to get involved. They drew parallels with the Paralympic Games and its positive impact.

DU will therefore work with other government departments to explore bidding to host the Games, considering in particular how delivering the Games could achieve lasting change for people with a learning disability.

Action 20: DU will work with other government departments and external experts in the coming months to explore bidding to host and deliver the 2031 Special Olympics World Summer Games.

Support people with guide and assistance dogs

Thousands of disabled people rely on assistance dogs, such as guide dogs, to help them with their daily activities. The Equality Act 2010 makes it illegal to refuse entry to a disabled person with an assistance dog (with very few exceptions). But disabled people are still refused access to retail, hospitality and transport facilities because they have an assistance dog. 'Access refusals' can have a negative effect on assistance dog users. They affect disabled people's confidence and make it harder for them to live a full and fulfilling life.

Access refusals are nearly always against the law. It is important that both the government and businesses address the issue to ensure that assistance dog users feel welcome in society.

In the consultation, DU proposed to work to reduce access refusals of guide dogs. This included working with guide dog users and organisations to find out what more the government could do. This included:

- thinking about increasing civil penalties (fines) for access refusals
- continuing work to raise awareness in this area

Summary of consultation findings

90% of written responses agreed with the proposal for the UK Government to work more closely with guide and assistance dog organisations. Responses to the suggestion of increasing fines for access refusals were more mixed. While there was some support for increasing fines, the general view was that this would not deter access refusals on its own. Respondents also noted that the measure would only apply to access refusals in taxis and private hire vehicles. It would not apply to access refusals experienced in the wider retail and hospitality industry.

Other respondents supported awareness-raising and education, both for businesses and assistance dog users. Assistance dog users needed to know their rights and feel confident in challenging access refusals. Businesses should better understand the needs of staff and customers, allowing them to fulfil their responsibilities under existing legislation and to expand their customer base.

A majority of respondents also agreed it was important to have a definition of an assistance dog. This definition would include an informed understanding of the terms “guide” and “assistance” dog.

Other suggestions included:

- penalties such as loss of trading licence
- publicising details of non-compliant businesses
- making it simpler to report access refusals

Taxis and private hire vehicles are regulated by local licensing authorities and the government’s updates to guidance, published in November 2023, underline that councils must take action against drivers who discriminate against disabled people, including assistance dog owners, bringing prosecutions and suspending or revoking licences where required.

DU and the previous Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work have had regular contact with Guide Dogs UK in relation to its ‘Open Doors’ campaign. More recently, DU has engaged with Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) as part of the Disability Action Plan consultation. Consultation respondents said the government should do more to bring these and other organisations together, along with owners who had trained their own assistance dogs. These groups could agree on joint actions to reduce access refusals and address other issues.

DU will therefore work to bring together guide and assistance dogs organisations. The aim will be to address some of the issues highlighted in this consultation. We will not proceed with the proposal to increase fines.

Action 21: A new working group with representatives from the guide dog and assistance animals sectors will make recommendations to the government on how to improve support for people with guide and assistance dogs.

DU will set up and co-ordinate this group with representatives from the guide dog and assistance animals sectors. The group will include owner trainers and organisations representing other assistance animals, such as emotional support animals.

This working group will meet in 2024 and make initial recommendations to the government after 6 months and final recommendations within 12 months.

The working group will explore issues such as:

- a definition for assistance dogs
- how best to raise awareness of a range of assistance animals, including emotional support animals
- educating the business sector on the legal rights of assistance dog owners
- simplifying reporting of access refusals

Help the government measure how effective its policies and services are for disabled people

A comprehensive and robust evidence base is a vital foundation for good policy-making. Over time, the government has improved its data collection and evaluation. But we recognise that there is still further to go and we want to build on the progress that has already been made.

The [Life Opportunities Survey](#), which ran from 2009 to 2014, looked at the life experiences of disabled and non-disabled people. 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. These gaps include consistent definitions of disability and impairment, and a lack of data and evidence on specific areas such as crime and safety.

Government evidence and evaluation of disabled people often focuses on outcomes. These outcomes can include the final result of a policy area or service, such as employment or a degree. While this information can be useful, it does not give the complete picture of the impacts of issues on disabled people. This information is also not always collected in a way that allows broad comparisons to be made. The wider disability evidence base is inconsistent. It does not provide the evidence needed to effectively develop and assess policies and services.

In the consultation, DU proposed to develop a programme to improve disability evidence and data across the government. We also proposed exploring creating a set of indicators to assess how effective government policies and services are. These would measure effectiveness based on the things that matter to disabled people.

We recognise that the data may show a mixed picture. However, the most important thing is to have a clear, accurate understanding of the issues affecting disabled people. Only by properly understanding their problems and experiences can the government identify the most appropriate solutions.

Summary of consultation findings

90% of respondents agreed with this proposal, and this support was also reflected in discussions at consultation events. People particularly welcomed the focus on disabled people's experience and looking at what matters most to disabled people. Many respondents highlighted the importance of research and data that was informed by people's experiences. Some event participants also raised the benefits of employing disabled researchers on this work.

These findings highlighted that research informed by disabled people's experience is vital for developing policies and services that are effective and based on evidence. Respondents also said this type of research can be useful for evaluating initiatives – for example, allowing people to consider the impact of a policy or service on disabled people's quality of life or day-to-day interactions. Respondents thought policy evaluation should include issues such as the impact on people's self worth, happiness, loneliness and quality of life.

There was support for the government to undertake annual disability surveys. These would aim to better understand disabled people's outcomes and barriers. It was suggested that research should include insights from people who cannot respond to surveys. It was important to represent the diversity of disabled people's experiences in research and policy development.

Respondents also highlighted that new research should build on existing data. It should not come at the expense of addressing data gaps that had already been identified.

DU will therefore take forward the following actions in this area. These build on commitments in the National Disability Strategy to make the UK Government's evidence on disability stronger.

Action 22: DU will develop a framework of evaluation and work with other government departments on a set of indicators to measure how effective policies and services are for disabled people.

Action 23: DU will work with other departments to improve the quality and comparability of their existing disability data.

This builds on the commitment in the National Disability Strategy to lead a multi-year programme to improve government disability data.

Action 24: DU will explore steps to set up a new survey on disabled people to address gaps in evidence.

Action 25: DU will continue to improve the government's understanding of the experiences of disabled people. It will do this by using insights from qualitative research to make government data on disabled people more relevant.

Research issues facing disabled people in the future

An essential principle of inclusive design is to build in inclusivity from the start, rather than adding it on later in the design process. For disabled people, this means designing accessible policies and services and promoting inclusion as early as possible. To do this in a strategic way, we need to know about emerging issues that will affect disabled people.

In the consultation, DU proposed commissioning 'foresight research'. This would aim to better understand the emerging issues and priorities for disabled people in the next 5, 10 and 20 years.

Summary of consultation findings

89% of respondents agreed with this proposal. People generally supported a more proactive approach to anticipating future challenges. But some respondents said there were more immediate needs to work on such as:

- a lack of accessible housing
- social isolation among disabled people
- improving social care

Building on the suggestions made in the consultation, 4 main areas have been identified as priorities for foresight research. These include:

- environmental challenges, such as how cities are built and communities are formed
- social challenges, such as changing attitudes towards disability
- economic challenges, such as preparing for future cost of living rises
- technological challenges, such as digital exclusion and the opportunities and threats of artificial intelligence

Respondents also wanted disabled people's lifelong needs to be better anticipated. For example, the increased demand for healthcare and housing infrastructure as someone gets older. This approach fits well with foresight research models which help to plan for future challenges.

DU will therefore commission disability foresight research. This will help the government and other interested parties to better anticipate the needs of disabled people.

Action 26: DU will commission disability foresight research to better understand the emerging issues and priorities for disabled people in the next 5, 10 and 20 years.

This research will use a research model that enables consideration of trends in:

- **social changes (including demographic)**
- **environmental changes**
- **economic changes**
- **technological changes**

This research will aim to consider the implications of trends for disabled people across factors including:

- **a range of impairment types**
- **all parts of the United Kingdom**

This work will draw on disabled people's experience research, and will be taken forward in collaboration with colleagues in the devolved administrations.

New: Make government publications and communications more accessible

Disabled people repeatedly report that government communications and information could be more accessible. The British Sign Language (BSL) Act (2022) encourages government departments to:

- consider the use of BSL in their communications
- report on their activities to promote and use BSL

While this helps to increase the use of BSL, and while many government departments already use accessible formats for some of their publications, more work is needed to provide communications and information in a range of alternative formats.

Summary of consultation findings

A theme highlighted in the [independent findings report](#) was around the importance of the government using accessible communications more often. Respondents repeatedly raised the need for better and more accessible communications from the UK Government. There was also a broader need to

- make sure information published by the government is accessible
- provide clear information about available resources

The UK Government continually works to improve the accessibility of its communications and information. This commitment to accessible communications is led from the very top. For that reason, Number 10 Downing Street will work to provide in-situ BSL interpretation for all major press conferences and briefings from spring 2024 onwards.

Number 10 also commits to increase the use of BSL in other communications. The government will be publishing a second report on the use of BSL in government communications by 31 July 2024. Number 10 is an operational part of the Cabinet Office, which is a relevant government department under Section 2 of the Act, and will include its data in the next government report.

The Government Communication Service's (GCS) [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) includes work to promote accessible communications, including standards, monitoring, training and guidance on accessibility and inclusion.

As part of its work on accessibility, GCS has already:

- published guidance for government departments on planning and creating BSL content for the public
- published guidance on its website that sets out accessibility standards for government departments – this is aligned with the charity sector's accessibility checklist where possible
- incorporated accessibility best practice into its training and development programme

GCS is currently working with its suppliers on opportunities to use automated technological solutions to improve the delivery of government communications and ensure that it is accessible to all.

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GCS is also planning test, learn and adapt pilots on the use of automated technological solutions to improve accessible communications, for example BSL translations and captioning. GCS will engage external stakeholders and end users, in order to validate the value of emerging technologies like this, before scaling across government communications.

The UK Government will continue to work to make its communications and information more accessible. It will use insights gained from stakeholders and public consultations as part of this.

But our consultation findings show a strong need for more accessible communications in many areas. DU has therefore identified this as an additional area of action. This will reinforce Action 6 above, to improve the use of accessible communications in the government's emergency and resilience planning.

Action 27: Number 10 Downing Street will work to provide in-situ BSL interpretation for all major press conferences and briefings from spring 2024 onwards.

Number 10 also commits to increase the use of BSL in other communications. The government will be publishing a second report on the use of BSL in government communications by 31 July 2024. Number 10 is an operational part of the Cabinet Office, which is a relevant government department under Section 2 of the Act, and will include its data in the next government report.

Action 28: GCS, supported by DU, will continue to promote accessible communications. This includes standards, monitoring, training and guidance on accessibility and inclusion across government.

This is with a view to maximising impact and significantly improving the accessibility of UK Government communications.

Action 29: DU will update guidance for government departments on providing accessible information. We will use our networks, including the Ministerial Disability Champions, to promote this across the government.

New: Improve understanding of the cost of living for disabled people

Another theme which ran through responses to the consultation was the long-term impact of the rising cost of living on disabled people, with respondents calling for greater support for disabled people. Research has shown that disabled people are significantly affected by rising costs.

Taken together, support to households to help with the high cost of living is worth £104 billion over 2022/23 to 2024/25, which includes 2 rounds of Cost of Living Payments over 2022/23 and 2023/24 to support those most vulnerable and on the lowest incomes. In addition, since spring 2022, the Disability Unit has worked to build the evidence base in this area and provide insights into disabled people's experiences.

Given the importance of this theme in consultation responses, the Disability Unit will ensure all consultation findings on this topic are considered in work to take forward the National Disability Strategy commitment to explore the development and setting up of an Extra Costs Taskforce. The purpose of the taskforce will be to bring together disabled people, regulators and business to better understand the extra costs disabled people face in their everyday lives.

The Disability Unit will also ensure that consultation findings relating to the impact of the cost of living on disabled people are shared with the relevant government departments, so that they can be used to inform policy development. We will also seek to share insights from our disabled people's experience panels and stakeholder engagement on priority issues from the consultation findings – for example, highlighting concerns around energy costs.

Action 30: DU will continue to engage across Government to highlight concerns related to disabled people and the cost of living, sharing insights from the Disability Action Plan consultation findings, stakeholder engagement and our broader disabled people's experience panels.

New: Promote better understanding of the UNCRPD across government

Several of the main themes from the consultation findings relate to important principles within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). For example, the consultation findings highlight the need for all policy making to ensure equality for and inclusion of disabled people. This principle is fundamental to the UNCRPD, underlining its purpose of driving forward the progressive realisation of disabled people's rights.

The actions within this action plan are all ultimately aimed at driving forward this underlying principle, with some of them speaking directly to articles within the UNCRPD. For example, work to better support disabled people into and in elected office aligns directly with [article 29](#) of the convention on participation in political and public life. Another example is work to improve data related to disabled people and their experiences, which responds directly to [article 31](#) on statistics and data collection.

In addition, DU will work to improve understanding of the UNCRPD across government, aiming to increase knowledge of the Convention and what it means for public policy across government. This work complements the NDS commitment to implement 5 elements in policy making and delivery.

Action 31: DU will work to promote better understanding of the UNCRPD across government.

New: Monitor and report progress of the Disability Action Plan

The consultation findings show a demand for:

- clear and measurable actions against each area in the Disability Action Plan
- clarity on who is accountable for putting them in place

Discussions in consultation events also highlighted that some proposed actions seemed vague. This would make it difficult to measure their progress or assess their impact.

Respondents thought the action plan should include a commitment to monitor and update on its progress. This was particularly the case for actions involving more than one sector, government department or service.

As a result of these findings, we have revised actions in this plan to be more specific about what will be done, when and by who where possible. DU will also publish regular reports on progress made against this action plan.

Action 32: DU will report formally on the progress made on the Disability Action Plan after 6 months and 12 months.

We will publish these updates in Parliament as written ministerial statements, and on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). We will also share them with our strategic stakeholder networks.

Removed: Raising the profile of assistive technology

Having the right assistive and accessible technology (ATech) allows disabled people to more fully enjoy and take part in education, work, travel, retail, sport and culture. This means ATech which is sensitive to their requirements, affordable and adaptive to their needs.

The range and application of assistive technology is varied and evolving quickly. The market is crowded, with many different choices and little reliable guidance. Cost is an increasing factor.

The government wants to make the UK the most accessible place in the world to live and work with technology. This is part of its wider vision to transform the lives of disabled people.

By working across government and with the ATech sector, we want to ensure that:

- assistive technology is available to people who need it
- disabled people are confident in using it

Summary of consultation findings

90% of respondents agreed that the government needed to do more to help disabled people to find and use the right ATech. But while many respondents agreed with the proposal to upskill public sector staff, many did not think it was the most urgent or helpful thing to do now. Instead, they highlighted a range of issues which the government should explore further.

These issues include the availability, affordability and constant renewal or improvement of ATech. Responses said that these are difficult for members of the public to keep pace with. This matches the findings in the [Assistive Technology Changes Lives](#) research by the Global Disability Innovation Hub (GDIH), funded by DU and published in July 2023.

Specific issues raised by consultation responses included:

- the changing ATech needs of disabled people throughout their lives, as outlined in the Business Disability Forum's Technology for Life model
- regional differences in access to ATech
- the difficulty of navigating existing government schemes providing ATech
- the barrier caused by digital exclusion.

The issue of barriers caused by digital exclusion was most frequently mentioned by individuals. This finding matches [research by the ONS](#) which shows that 59.4% of adult internet non-users¹ in 2020 were disabled. While the number of disabled people who are internet non-users has decreased over time, the gap in internet use between disabled and non-disabled people has increased.

The National Disability Strategy included an action to invest up to £1 million in 2021 to 2022 to develop a new Centre for Assistive and Accessible Technology (CAAT), reporting on progress by summer 2022. Work on this was paused in 2022-2023 due to a High Court ruling. This ruling has now been overturned at the Court of Appeal, allowing work to recommence.

The government will therefore restart work to take forward the establishment of the CAAT. This will create a national focus for expertise, and would be well placed to bring together relevant government departments (including the Disability Unit, the Department of Health and Social Care, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and other government departments), business, academia and the tech sector with a view to sharing information on the technology which already exists to improve people's lives, and to identifying areas where further innovation is needed. It could propose actions to address issues raised in the Disability Action Plan consultation and the findings of the GDIH needs assessment and proposals included in the Assistive Technology Changes Lives research.

To ensure that a new CAAT can determine its own scope and work programme, and in line with consultation findings, we will not take forward the Disability Action Plan consultation proposals in this area at this time.

¹ This includes people who have never used the internet or who have not used it for more than 3 months.

Annex A – List of actions

Action 1: DU will work with disabled people to design a new way to provide financial support for disabled people to access elected office. This will be launched in 2025. We will work in collaboration with disabled people with a range of experience of elected office. We will ensure diverse representation across impairment types and backgrounds.

Action 2: As a first step, DU will develop and publish new guidance by summer 2024 on how political parties and elected public bodies can best support disabled candidates, drawing on lessons from the Local Government Association’s work in this area and other sources.

Action 3: DU will work alongside the House of Commons to support implementation of disability-related actions where possible.

Action 4: The Cabinet Office Resilience Directorate will ensure that disabled people’s experiences are reflected in resilience planning. It will do this by inviting a disabled people’s organisation representative to attend the UK Resilience Forum. We will also enable disabled people (via DPOs and other disability representatives across impairment types) to contribute to UK Government guidance to Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) on supporting ‘vulnerable’ people in an emergency.

Action 5: DU will build relationships with emergency and resilience planners across government. This will help to strengthen knowledge and understanding of disability-inclusive practices in emergency and resilience work.

Action 6: The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work will lead a discussion with the Ministerial Disability Champions on the importance of accessible communications. A focus area will be to improve accessible communications and information about resilience and emergencies.

Action 7: DU will explore how to ensure that ULEZ and CAZ better consider the needs of disabled people. It will do this together with disabled people, other experts and relevant government departments.

Action 8: DU will bring together academics, disabled people and decision makers for a conference on climate adaptation and disability.

Action 9: DU will work closely with strategic teams across national government to increase awareness of disability inclusion in existing policies. This will include teams within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Action 10: DU will carry out a systematic analysis to better understand the information and data that policy makers and disabled people need to make climate adaptations disability inclusive. As part of this, DU will look for opportunities to fill data and information gaps, and make data more available and accessible.

Action 11: DU will set up a disabled people’s experience panel for 2024 to support the cross-government work (action 9) and research development (action 10). The panel will include people with a range of impairment types and experiences, and from different locations.

Action 12: A disabled people's experience panel drawn from existing networks of disabled people's organisations will work with DU and other partners on initiatives to address a number of issues raised in this consultation where there is opportunity to make a difference in the short term. This includes supporting actions 13 to 15, embedding disabled people's experience in the products created.

This panel will be made up of disabled parents and guardians, disabled children, and carers (including young carers) to amplify their voices. It will include representation across impairment types, and will involve people born with impairments and people who acquire impairments at different life stages.

Action 13: DU will explore and develop a new, accessible online information hub for families with disabled members. This will make it easier for them to find resources and information about government policies. This work complements work led by DfE to roll out 'Family Hubs'.

Action 14: DU will work with partners to develop new products addressing specific issues experienced by families with disabled members. These include:

- a guide for local authorities to support more constructive relationships with disabled parents
- a training module supporting education professionals to identify young and sibling carers
- improved signposting to existing anti-bullying training for teachers and teaching assistants, including resources on the impact of bullying on disabled children and how to identify it

The families disabled people's experience panel will consider other products that might be needed and could be developed in the near future.

Action 15: DU will lead work to improve the evidence base on disability and domestic abuse. It will do this with disabled people, DPOs, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, domestic abuse sector (including by and for organisations), the Home Office and other relevant partners. This work will consider the experiences of a wide range of disabled people with different impairment types.

Action 16: DU will create an online hub of information for local authorities on creating accessible playgrounds. The new families disabled people's experience panel will support the hub's development. For example, it will review potential guidance and highlight any information gaps. This could include using the hub to promote opportunities for disabled children to get involved in inclusive physical activity – for example, by linking to information about inclusive community sports.

Action 17: DU will explore the most effective way of creating guidance on how to develop more inclusive and accessible playgrounds. This is with a view to developing and publishing such guidance, so that more children, young people and families can enjoy accessible playgrounds in their local area.

We will work closely with the families disabled people's experience panel, local authorities, playground equipment and facilities providers, and other organisations with expertise in this area.

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Action 18: DU will publish research into the accessibility of private sector products and services in spring 2024. This will provide more information about the accessibility of different sectors (including retail and leisure) and the end-to-end customer journey for disabled people.

Action 19: DU will work to further understand issues such as:

- existing training schemes and their success for disabled consumers and businesses
- whether and how disability awareness training adds value to organisations and improves consumer experience
- the end-to-end customer journey, exploring how a scheme could address accessibility across sectors
- whether disabled people are aware of their rights and know how to enforce them

This work will consider the needs of a wide range of disabled people with different impairment types.

Action 20: DU will work with other government departments and external experts in the coming months to explore bidding to host and deliver the 2031 Special Olympics World Summer Games.

Action 21: A new working group with representatives from the guide dog and assistance animals sectors will make recommendations to the government on how to improve support for people with guide and assistance dogs.

DU will set up and co-ordinate this group with representatives from the guide dog and assistance animals sectors. The group will include owner trainers and organisations representing other assistance animals, such as emotional support animals.

This working group will meet in 2024 and make initial recommendations to the government after 6 months and final recommendations within 12 months.

The working group will explore issues such as:

- a definition for assistance dogs
- how best to raise awareness of a range of assistance animals, including emotional support animals
- educating the business sector on the legal rights of assistance dog owners
- simplifying reporting of access refusals

Action 22: DU will develop a framework of evaluation and work with other government departments on a set of indicators to measure how effective policies and services are for disabled people.

Action 23: DU will work with other departments to improve the quality and comparability of their existing disability data. This builds on the commitment in the National Disability Strategy to lead a multi-year programme to improve government disability data.

Action 24: DU will explore steps to set up a new survey on disabled people to address gaps in evidence.

Action 25: DU will continue to improve the government's understanding of the experiences of disabled people. It will do this by using insights from qualitative research to make government data on disabled people more relevant.

Action 26: DU will commission disability foresight research to better understand the emerging issues and priorities for disabled people in the next 5, 10 and 20 years.

This research will use a research model that enables consideration of trends in:

- social changes (including demographic)
- environmental changes
- economic changes
- technological changes

This research will aim to consider the implications of trends for disabled people across factors including:

- a range of impairment types
- all parts of the United Kingdom

This work will draw on disabled people's experience research, and will be taken forward in collaboration with colleagues in the devolved administrations.

Action 27: Number 10 Downing Street will work to provide in-situ BSL interpretation for all major press conferences and briefings from spring 2024 onwards. Number 10 also commits to increase the use of BSL in other communications. The government will be publishing a second report on the use of BSL in government communications by 31 July 2024. Number 10 is an operational part of the Cabinet Office, which is a relevant government department under Section 2 of the Act, and will include its data in the next government report.

Action 28: GCS, supported by DU, will continue to promote accessible communications. This includes standards, monitoring, training and guidance on accessibility and inclusion across government. This is with a view to maximising impact and significantly improving the accessibility of UK Government communications.

Action 29: DU will update guidance for government departments on providing accessible information. We will use our networks, including the Ministerial Disability Champions, to promote this across the government.

Action 30: DU will continue to engage across Government to highlight concerns related to disabled people and the cost of living, sharing insights from the Disability Action Plan consultation findings, stakeholder engagement and our broader disabled people's experience panels.

Action 31: DU will work to promote better understanding of the UNCRPD across government.

Action 32: DU will report formally on the progress made on the Disability Action Plan after 6 months and 12 months. We will publish these updates in Parliament as written ministerial statements, and on GOV.UK. We will also share them with our strategic stakeholder networks.

