

The Mayor's Action Plan for Deaf and Disabled Londoners

Executive summary

Key information

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Introduction

The Mayor is committed to making London a fairer, more inclusive city where everyone is respected, valued, and able to thrive. Central to this is ensuring Deaf and Disabled Londoners can fully participate in everyday life.

London is home to over 1.2 million Deaf and Disabled people whose contributions are vital to the city's success. Yet many continue to face barriers that limit access to opportunities and independent living. Despite progress on accessibility and inclusion, inequalities persist across transport, employment, education, housing, and community safety, with Deaf and Disabled Londoners disproportionately affected by poverty and the cost of living.

This Action Plan has been shaped following close engagement with Deaf and Disabled Londoners, placing lived experience at its heart and focusing on the issues that matter most. It sets out practical actions across key areas where the Mayor has levers of control – including transport, employment, housing, policing and safety, and tackling poverty – to reduce inequalities and improve the experiences of Disabled Londoners.

While the plan focuses on areas within the Mayor's powers, some challenges - such as welfare, healthcare, and operational aspects of policing - lie beyond direct control. Delivering lasting change will, therefore, require continued partnership with government, stakeholders, and communities.

This Action Plan marks the start of a sustained commitment to tackling the inequalities and barriers faced by Deaf and Disabled Londoners. It combines practical actions to deliver tangible improvements now with longer-term changes that will aim to embed the lived experience of Deaf and Disabled Londoners more consistently across the Greater London Authority (GLA)'s work. The Action Plan provides a platform for continued progress, supporting our ambition to create a city where Deaf and Disabled Londoners can fully participate, thrive and help shape London's future.

Overall, this Action Plan marks an important step towards a more inclusive London, where Deaf and Disabled people have equal opportunities and are supported to live full and independent lives.

Poverty and inequality

Disabled Londoners experience higher rates of poverty than non-Disabled Londoners. While many of the factors influencing poverty sit beyond the Mayor's direct control, the Mayor remains committed to ensuring that Disabled Londoners can access the support they are entitled to. The Mayor has committed to using available levers to help alleviate poverty among Disabled Londoners, with a particular focus on improving access to advice services for financial hardship.

Engagement with Disabled Londoners highlighted concerns such as low levels of income from benefits, barriers to accessing programmes and services supporting access to rights and entitlements, and stressed expectations of the Mayor to work with the wider funding sector to develop and encourage best practice.

To address these issues, we will:

- work with Disabled Londoners to ensure their voices inform the Mayor's response to government decisions on disability benefits and income-related issues
- pilot improvements to accessible advice provision to better integrate the needs of Disabled Londoners in the GLA's financial hardship programme design and delivery, including by delivering training to staff, venue descriptions for locations with funded advice services and including Disabled Londoners in programme governance structures
- improve benefit take-up through its income maximisation programme, including a pilot to focus on uptake of disability benefits.

Overall, these actions will embed Disabled Londoners' experiences in the design and delivery of more accessible services, reduce barriers to accessing benefits, and contribute to tackling poverty and inequality.

Policing and safety

Disabled Londoners face significant barriers in their interactions with the policing system. Evidence shows they are more likely to experience crime and often report lower levels of trust and confidence in the police. The Mayor is committed to ensuring all Londoners feel safe and are treated with dignity and respect, and recognises the importance of including Disabled voices in decision-making. The Mayor has committed to improving support for Disabled Londoners, particularly in relation to emergency response, tackling hate crime, and embedding lived experience in decision-making.

Engagement with Disabled Londoners highlighted barriers in reporting crime and accessing support as victims, the need for greater collaboration and inclusion of lived experience in decision-making, and gaps in fire evacuation planning and emergency response.

To address these issues, we will:

- pilot new, more safe and appropriate ways for Disabled Londoners to report crime and improve victim support for Disabled Londoners. This includes working with Disabled victims of crime and exploring ways to simplify reporting.
- embed lived experience in decision making within Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)'s oversight and scrutiny of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), including through co-production and advisory groups, and disability hate crime and leadership training.
- work with the London Fire Brigade and local authorities to ensure safe evacuation routes and appropriate support for Disabled Londoners during emergencies.

Overall, these actions will strengthen support for Disabled victims of crime, improve reporting and accountability, and ensure Disabled Londoners' experiences shape policing and emergency responses across London.

Housing and planning

Disabled Londoners face significant barriers in accessing safe, affordable housing that meets their needs, with consequences for their health, independence, and sense of community. The Mayor has committed to using all available levers to improve the provision and planning of accessible homes that better meet the needs of Disabled Londoners.

Engagement with Disabled Londoners identified the need for more holistic planning to meet the housing needs of Disabled Londoners, the inaccessibility of temporary accommodation for those fleeing domestic abuse, the insufficiency of data on accessible housing, and lack of immediate access to suitable accessible properties.

To address these issues, we will:

- focus on accessibility throughout the development of the London Plan
- provide funding to increase the provision of accessible, safe and high-quality accommodation-based support for Disabled survivors of domestic abuse
- work to ensure that high-quality data is available to partners working on housing access for Disabled Londoners, including through introducing processes to maintain higher quality data moving forward
- support partners, including boroughs and housing providers, to better understand and meet accessible housing needs of their communities and use available data to inform decision-making and accountability
- work to improve access to suitable homes across different tenures and better embed lived experience in decision making

Overall, these actions will increase supply of safe and accessible accommodation provision for survivors of abuse, improve the quality and availability of data to support plan delivery and improve transparency, improve the availability of accessible housing, and ensure Disabled Londoners' experiences are embedded in housing policy and delivery.

Transport

Disabled Londoners often experience inconsistent and unpredictable journeys on public transport, which can be less accessible, less safe, and more costly, which impacts their ability to participate fully in everyday life. The Mayor has committed to using available powers to make transport as accessible and affordable as possible for Disabled Londoners.

Engagement with Disabled Londoners highlighted barriers to travel such as accessibility, affordability and safety, the need to engage Disabled people in decision-making, particularly regarding proposed changes to Taxicard, and gaps in frontline staff awareness and understanding.

To address these issues, we will:

- work to improve uptake of concessionary travel options for Disabled Londoners
- work with partners to ensure Disabled Londoners are engaged in improvements to Taxicard
- work to improve training for frontline staff and ensure they better understand and can meet the needs of Disabled Londoners

Overall, these actions will improve access to affordable travel, enhance the support provided by frontline staff, and help ensure Disabled Londoners can travel with greater confidence and independence.

Employment and skills

Disabled Londoners face significant barriers to accessing and sustaining good-quality employment that matches their skills and needs, contributing to higher rates of poverty. The Mayor has committed to using available levers to remove barriers to employment and training and ensure that Disabled Londoners can benefit from London's growth.

Engagement with Disabled Londoners highlighted the need to embed lived experience in programme design and delivery, a lack of flexible and inclusive employment opportunities, and barriers to accessing employment support services.

To address these issues, we will:

- increase our work to tackle employment barriers by embedding lived experience voices in employment support programmes, including through testing new approaches to integrated employment support and embedding lived experiences through employment support programmes
- help create more accessible and inclusive workplaces and continue to learn about the importance of intersectional approaches
- work to improve access to GLA-funded skills provision and to support increasing Disabled Londoners' awareness of available services and identifying the most appropriate services for them

Overall, these actions will strengthen London's inclusive employment ecosystem shaped by Disabled Londoners' experiences, and ensure individuals accessing employment and skills services are supported by staff who understand their needs and the barriers they face.

Greater London Authority's ways of working

Disabled Londoners report facing some barriers when working with the GLA, particularly in accessing its services and support. The Mayor has committed to ensuring that Disabled Londoners can better shape the work of the GLA and access its services and support.

Engagement with Disabled Londoners highlighted inconsistent engagement that lacks clear outcomes and meaningful inclusion of lived experience, as well as complex and inaccessible processes across services, consultations, and events.

To address these issues, the GLA will:

- strengthen its engagement with Disabled Londoners, including by strengthening the Deaf and Disabled People's Organisation (DDPO) Forum and embedding more consistent feedback loops, appointing a lived experience co-chair to the forum, and appointing GLA disability commissioners to provide additional resources to support the delivery of the Action Plan
- strengthen accessibility of GLA services and events and work to ensure that staff will be able to understand the needs of Disabled people and facilitate their involvement
- strengthen access to relevant GLA programmes including grant funding and procurement processes

Overall, these actions will strengthen the representation of Disabled Londoners in the GLA's work, improve accountability through more effective engagement, and raise standards of accessibility and inclusion across all activities, communications, and services.

Explore the full Action Plan

Access the full Action Plan for Deaf and Disabled Londoners

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