Greater Manchester Mayoral Manifesto on Disability

(Text only version)

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1. Introduction/Summary

Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) is the oldest and most respected cross-impairment, disabled people's controlled organisation in Greater Manchester. Formed in 1985 with legacy funding from Greater Manchester Council, GMCDP seeks to promote the inclusion of disabled people within society using the Social Model of Disability - the belief that it is obstacles and barriers (physical, organisational and attitudinal) created by society that disables people rather than their impairments.

The Seven Needs for Independent Living (see Appendices) were originally developed by disabled people as the means by which the main barriers to our integration into society could be removed, and we could leave residential homes and take our rightful place in our communities. Without them we are not only unable to secure our place in the workplace but face the very real threat of being forced back into institutional care.

The provision of Information, Peer Support, Accessible (and affordable) Housing, Equipment and Adaptations, Personal Support (or care), Environmental Access and Transport are essential precursors to disabled people gaining access to education and employment and helping to reduce the enormous economic disadvantage we currently face.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)(https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-human-rights-work/monitoring-and-promoting-un-treaties/un-convention-rights-persons-disabilities), ratified by the UK in 2009, sets out what human rights mean in the context of disability. The first human rights treaty of the twenty-first century, it represents a major step towards realising the right of disabled people to be treated as full and equal citizens and the UK has committed to promoting and protecting the full enjoyment of human rights by disabled people and ensuring they have full equality under the law. The UNCRPD covers a wide range of areas including health, education, employment, access to justice, personal security, independent living, and access to information.

Whilst the Greater Manchester Mayor does not have direct responsibility for delivering all of the services that we require to protect and promote our independence, the Mayor will have an important ambassadorial role and opportunity to promote best practice. This manifesto for disabled people has been produced to assist the Mayor in becoming our ally and champion in our fight for equality. It provides the opportunity to build upon 30 years of successful partnership between disabled people and local government, initiated by the former GMC, developed by the ten districts and, with your support, implemented by the Elected Mayor.

2. Independent Living

This means, simply, all disabled people having the same choice, control and freedom as any other citizen - at home, at work, and as members of the community. This does not necessarily mean disabled people 'doing everything for themselves', but it does mean that any practical assistance people need should be based on their own choices and aspirations.

2.a (i): The Mayoral Office will work with the Leaders of the 10 GM authorities and theHeads of Health and Social Care to ensure that they recognise the equal right of all disabled persons to live in the community, with choices equal to others. They will also take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by disabled people of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community by ensuring that;

2.a (ii): Disabled people have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement;

2.a. (iii): Disabled people have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance, necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community;

2.a. (iv): Community services and facilities for the general population are available to disabled people on an equal basis and are responsive to their needs. (Taken from article 1.19 of the Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance)

2.b: All commissioned and contracted providers, working on behalf of the Mayor and the Combined Authority fulfill Equality Act duties and demonstrate a proven track record and a continuing commitment to providing accessible and inclusive services and to employing Deaf and disabled people.

2.c: Funding or otherwise sustain, a GM Access Forum to provide specific expertise on strategic planning issues.

2.d: Developing, in co-production with DPOs and the wider voluntary sector, an advice and advocacy strategy for Greater Manchester to ensure adequate access to information, advice and advocacy for disabled people in the region.

2.e: Leading work with the ten GM districts to develop and establish a GM Independent Living Fund along the lines of the Scottish scheme. (<http://ilf.scot/about-us/how-we-work/>) - (<http://ilf.scot/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Joint-COSLA-ILF-Scotland-Statement-V2.pdf>)

2.f. Engaging directly with GM DPO’s about the impact on disabled people' independent living in relation to the pooling of Social Care budgets across GM and the merging of health and social care.

3. Housing

Disabled people should have the right to live in our own homes. These homes should be accessible, and enable us to live independent lives. There should be ambitious, but achievable quotas and targets in relation to accessible housing. Both central and local governments should use all their existing powers to ensure that both private and social housing developments (including refurbishment schemes) meet the highest access standards.

Although there are many definitions and regulations, put simply: accessible housing refers to the construction, or modification (such as through renovation or home modification), of housing to enable independent living for disabled people.

3.a: The Mayoral Office will commit to working with Planning Authorities regarding Local Plans in Greater Manchester requiring all private sector new build to meet Lifetime Homes standards and 10% of new build to be wheelchair accessible and truly affordable. These are the equivalent to category 2 and category 3 in Approved Document M of the Building Regulations Access and Use of Buildings Volume One (2010) which need to be specified in Local Plans as compulsory in the planning process.

([http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20151113141044/http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/br/br\_pdf\_ad\_m1\_2015.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20151113141044/http:/www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/br/br_pdf_ad_m1_2015.pdf) )

3.b: The Mayoral Office will work to ensure that a comprehensive assessment of accessible and adapted housing across the Greater Manchester City Region is carried out in order to influence planning, provision and allocation, is targeted at need, and provides low cost secure tenancies for all.

3.c: Funds allocated for Disabled Facilities Grants must be ring-fenced for the purpose of improving physical access to and within the homes of disabled people to facilitate independent and inclusive living

1. Inclusive Further Education and Skills Sector.

Education should support the development of physical, vocational and academic abilities through mixed-ability tuition so that all students have the opportunity to build relationships with one another. In this way disabled and non-disabled people develop common values through living and learning alongside each other. (Alliance for Inclusive Education)

Inclusive Education in the Further Education and Skills Sector (FESS) has demonstrated over the last twenty years clear values and principles which underpin the rights of each student.

The benefit for disabled students is that they are an integral part of the educational/training provision, as are all other students not in segregated settings. Inclusive education puts the focus on good effective and meaningful support to allow all students to take a full part in the life of the organisation. Inclusive education benefits disabled and non-students alike, in that they each gain from a diversity of teaching and learning strategies applied to ensure maximum access to the curriculum of their choice.

Working with the relevant agencies, the Mayoral Office will:

4.a: Promote Inclusive Education across the FESS within Greater Manchester, and compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD- Article 24).

4.b. Consult with Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) to ensure an approach based upon the Social Model of Disability. A student-centred approach will be taken to identify barriers and solutions in promoting access to FESS for disabled people.

4.c. Share good inclusive practice across the FESS in Greater Manchester and actively encourage collaboration between appropriate organisations.

4.d. Ensure that there will be active recruitment of disabled people to the teaching and ancillary staff in the FESS organisations, and such recruitment will be subjected to ongoing, published monitoring.

4.e. Encourage ‘Continuing Professional Development’ across the FESS in Greater Manchester to be accessible and inclusive of disabled people.

4.f. Promote and sponsor inclusive apprenticeships, where applications from disabled people are actively encouraged with ongoing published monitoring.

5. Transport

Disabled people should have equal access to all forms of transport that are available for the public to use. This goes beyond public transport, and includes taxis, planes, boats etc. GMCDP believes that transport regulators, licensing departments, central government etc should use all their existing powers of enforcement to ensure that disabled people have increased access to all forms of transport

'Transport should be accessible for everyone. Accessible buses, coaches, trains and taxis make it easier for people to visit friends, get to the shops or to work. It’s good for the economy and means fewer car journeys, which reduces carbon emissions'. (Taken from Department of Transport – Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee - Accessible Transport Policy).

Working with the relevant agencies, the Mayoral Office will:

5.a: Bus: Incentivise bus companies through stricter penalties regarding enforcement of wheelchair priority in the wheelchair bay and giving people enough time to sit down before the bus moves off.

5.b: Train: Commit to working with Train Operating Companies and Network Rail to produce a 5 year plan that will ensure that all Greater Manchester train stations are ‘step free’ from entrance to platform.

5.c: Tram: in collaboration with DPO’s and Tram operators, initiate a young disabled people's travel training programme focusing on safety and independence. Prioritise lift repairs (minimum 24hrs) where there is no alternative ramped access/egress to Tram stops.

5.d: Aviation: Ensure that Manchester International Airport (and all airlines using the airport) offer a ‘hoist’ system for boarding and disembarking people with reduced mobility, with customer service training which is DPO-led.

5.e: Taxi: In collaboration with DPO’s and the taxi trade, commission a ‘compliance and reporting’ publicity campaign on the legal position regarding charging disabled people extra or refusing a fare from a disabled person, to include both hackney and minicab hire.

5.f: In collaboration with DPO’s, host a “Disabled People’s Transport Summit” within the first 18 months of taking up post.

6. Disability Hate Crime

In 2011 the Equality and Human Rights Commission report into disability - related harassment found that cases that get to court and receive media coverage are only the tip of the iceberg: it found that for many harassment is a common experience, and many disabled people had come to accept it as inevitable. GMCDP believes that, although great strides have been made, disability hate crime is still not dealt with appropriately by the criminal and justice systems.

Working with the relevant agencies, the Mayoral Office will:

6. a: Set up DPO-led training in recognising and reporting disability hate crime for frontline Greater Manchester Police (GMP) staff and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

6.b: Promote and resource the development of DPOs as third party reporting centres and specialist advocacy providers for victims of disability hate crime

6.c: Support a lobby ofnational government for equality of legislation so there is parity with the law covering other hate crime strands.

7. Conclusion

This Manifesto is intended as a starting point. We aim for it to be both helpful and informative - the breadth of issues covered (which is by no means exhaustive) demonstrates that disability is about so much more than 'health and social care', whilst the helpfulness is in the provision of ideas for ways to tackle the issues.

We propose the Mayoral Office establish an advisory body, comprising representatives of Greater Manchester Disabled People’s Organisations, in order to develop and progress these and further initiatives.

We believe that devolution in Greater Manchester offers a unique opportunity to develop groundbreaking initiatives to tackle disability. Through this Manifesto we are offering to work with the Mayor and with other relevant agenciesto turn these opportunities into realities.

Joe Whittaker , Chair

GMCDP, January 2017

8. Appendices:

Seven Needs of Independent Living

* Information: disabled people should have equal access to information. It is only with access to information that disabled people can make informed choices about their lives. Service providers should work with disabled people to produce and disseminate information for disabled people in a range of accessible formats, such as: audio, braille, easy-read, large print, BSL video, etc.
* Peer support: Disabled people should have the opportunity to be in contact with, and have access to the support of other disabled people. Resources should be made available to facilitate the establishment of Peer Support Groups. Peer Support can be an empowering tool, as it enables disabled people to discuss, and draw strength from, our shared experiences.
* Housing: Disabled people should have the right to live in our own homes. These homes should be accessible, and enable us to live independent lives. There should be ambitious, but achievable quotas and targets in relation to accessible housing. Both central and local governments should use all their existing powers to ensure that both private and social housing developments (including refurbishment schemes) meet the highest access standards.
* Equipment: Disabled people should have access to information about what equipment and adaptations are available that assist us with day to day tasks. In addition, any application and assessment process should be simple and completed without delay. This process should not only apply to new applications but also in relation to the repair or replacement of existing equipment. Disabled people should not be denied necessary equipment because of their inability to pay.
* Personal Assistance: Disabled people should be assessed for, and provided with, sufficient financial resources to employ Personal Assistants so that we can live independent lives. Disabled people should not be financially penalised due to the level of support required.
* Transport: Disabled people should have equal access to all forms of transport that are available for the public to use. This goes beyond public transport, and includes taxis, planes, boats etc. GMCDP believes that transport regulators, licensing departments, central government etc should use all their existing powers of enforcement to ensure that disabled people have increased access to all forms of transport.
* Access: Access in and around the built environment should be a priority for all existing and future developments. This should go beyond just ramps, drop kerbs, tactile paving, induction loops, signage etc, but should also include attitudinal barriers. Local authorities and other service providers should consult with disabled people amend their access policies that go beyond minimum standards and promote best practice.