

Accessible City Strategy Disability Panel

Accessibility

If you would like this letter or information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call us on 01273 291952 or email EDI.Officer-Disability@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) is registered with [signlive.co.uk](https://www.signlive.co.uk), and British Sign Language (BSL) users can use the service to make a video call via a BSL interpreter and leave a message on the number above.

Purpose and expectations of the Panel

What is expected from Disability Panel members?

- support Brighton & Hove City Council to meet their Public Sector Equality Duty, by prioritising accessibility when the Council considers developing or changing a policy, project or service
- help the City Council to enact its positive duty regarding treating disabled people more favourably
- help Brighton & Hove City Council understand the experience of any barriers faced by disabled people
- advise on potential solutions to removing barriers which might be found during the strategy's development and implementation
- highlight gaps in provision for D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse people across all Brighton & Hove City Council departments, so that the gaps can be addressed by the Accessible City Strategy
- proactively offer guidance on how best to consult, engage with and involve disabled people in developing and reviewing the Accessible City Strategy and other relevant strategies
- advise Brighton & Hove City Council on the monitoring and reporting framework that should be set up to effectively implement the Accessible City Strategy

- be prepared to voice their lived experience, but not be focused solely on a single issue, as panel members are expected to speak for a range of disabled people in the community
- accept that once a particular issue has been sufficiently explored, it will not be revisited unless for a critical reason
- respect confidentiality and not share confidential information outside the Panel (including within their organisations, in the press or on social media, without prior written permission from Brighton & Hove City Council): this applies both during and after the Panel Members' term of appointment.

In its work the Panel must recognise it does not have the authority to:

- expect their views wholly or in part, to be accepted and acted upon by the Council
- commit or expend resources on the Council's behalf
- commit the Council to any actions
- consider any matter outside its specific areas of activity
- direct Council employees in the performance of their duties
- represent the Council in any communication with the public or media
- act in the name of the Panel outside the remit of the Panel.

What is expected of Brighton & Hove City Council?

- ensure that the Disability Panel's expertise is used at the strategic level
- consult the Panel at all appropriate points of the Accessible City Strategy's life cycle
- provide a reasonable amount of time for the Panel to undertake its work on any specific issue
- adjust the way the Panel runs to ensure it is fully accessible to Panel members
- report back to the Panel on how their input has been incorporated and what actions or outcomes have been achieved as a result
- provide a response to issues raised and discussed by the Panel in as timely as possible a way, ensuring a clear feedback loop

- consult with the Panel prior to the release of any Press Releases regarding the Accessible City Strategy
- give due reference to the Disability Panel, wherever appropriate, in either the Community Engagement or Equality Impact Assessment sections of BHCC committee reports
- host an annual stakeholder event/conference with relevant partners, at which progress on the Accessible City Strategy and the work of the Disability Panel will be shared and then reported to the relevant Council Committees
- facilitate a wider reference group of D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse people's organisations to provide support and subject matter expertise to the Panel.

How the Panel will operate

1: Introduction

The Disability Panel is a key component in the effective development and delivery of Brighton and Hove City Council's (BHCC) Accessible City Strategy. It ensures that D/deaf, disabled people and neurodiverse people and their organisations are centrally involved in the development and implementation of this strategy.

2: Role of Panel

The Panel is created by the council for the purpose of providing strategic, expert and impartial advice to the Council on the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the Accessible City Strategy and associated action plan(s).

3: Principles

The following principles of good governance will guide the functions of the Panel:

- Participatory;
- Respectful;
- Accountable;
- Transparent;
- Responsive;
- Effective and efficient;
- Equitable and inclusive;
- Ethical;
- Abide by the Nolan principles¹

¹ [The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

4: Conduct and Confidentiality

Panel members will need to declare any conflicts of interest and must adhere to BHCC's policy and procedure in this respect.

Panel members may be given access to information not yet in the public domain or which is policy under development. This information must not be shared outside the Panel, including within their organisations, in the press or on social media, without prior written permission from BHCC. This applies both during and after the Panel Members' term of appointment.

5: Membership and Term

The Panel shall consist of a maximum of twelve members. The membership will consist of four independent D/deaf, disabled people and neurodiverse people and representatives from eight different D/deaf, disabled people and neurodiverse people's organisations (DPOs)

It is important to have Panel members who are people with lived experience of disability whether personally or through a caring and support role.

The D/deaf, disabled people and neurodiverse people's organisations represented on the Panel shall include:

1. a pan-disability organisation with a broad role of delivering and supporting disabled people within the city [Possability People];
2. an organisation with a focus on working with children and young disabled people [Amaze];
3. an organisation with a focus on working with people with a learning or neuro-difference [Grace Eyre/Speak Out];
4. an organisation with a focus on working with disabled people from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds [tbc following panel discussion];
5. An organisation with a focus on sensory impairment [tbc following panel discussion];
6. An organisation with a focus on mental health [Mind];
7. An organisation with a focus on long term, limiting condition [tbc following panel discussion];
8. An organisation with a focus on non-visible disabilities [tbc following panel discussion]

A list of Panel members shall be posted on the Council's website.

One member of the Panel shall be appointed by the Panel members as the Chair of the Panel and will serve in this role for two years with the option to

be re-appointed for a further one year. The role of the Chair of the Disability Panel will be to:

- lead and chair Disability Panel meetings;
- determine the agenda for Panel meetings;
- represent the Panel in a wider Council context where required;
- Act as a conduit for other organisations not on the Panel to ensure their views and ideas are heard within the Panel.

If members of the Disability Panel or an appropriate Executive Officer of the Council has concerns with the way the Chair is delivering on their role, a vote of the whole Disability Panel shall take place to determine whether there is confidence in this individual. They may be removed from the role of Chair if a majority equal to or greater than two thirds of the Disability Panel vote that they do not have confidence in the individual continuing in that role.

The term of membership for individuals shall be two years with a right to reappoint for a further year. Individuals may serve for up to a maximum of three years.

Organisational membership will be reviewed every two years by the Council to ensure they remain representative of the sector.

A person or organisation ceases to be a Panel member if they:

- resign;
- are absent from two consecutive meetings without notification or valid reason; or
- fail to follow these Terms of Reference.

Any member may resign by giving written notice to the Panel's Chair.

To ensure consistency there is an expectation that organisations are represented by one nominated employee member throughout the term of membership, and that if need be one proxy is nominated to attend.

The Panel may, at its own discretion, decide to co-opt members on to the Panel to work on short projects or to bring a specific expertise/lived experience to an issue. Anyone co-opted on to the Panel will be a member for an agreed timeframe and purpose. In addition, any co-optee will agree to work within these Terms of Reference.

The Panel will be supported in its work by a Wider Reference Group consisting of disabled persons' organisations (DPOs), whose remit will be to support and inform the work of the Disability Panel, providing further targeted expertise on specific disability issues as subject matter experts.

6: Recruitment

Vacant individual positions on the Panel will be proactively promoted via D/deaf, disabled people and neurodiverse people 's organisations, stakeholders, advocates and community organisations with a call for Expressions of Interest. Additionally, the vacancies will be promoted through a range of other channels which may include:

- social media;
- BHCC website; and
- disability sector networks.

D/deaf, disabled people and neurodiverse people from diverse backgrounds will be encouraged to apply.

Applicants will be requested to express their interest in being on the Panel by addressing the selection criteria which will be articulated in the promotional material.

A group made up of the Chair of the Disability Panel, at least one other member of the Panel and at least one senior BHCC employee will oversee and determine the process for selection. Where more suitable people have expressed an interest than seats available on the Panel, a recruitment exercise will be undertaken. If the same number of suitable people express an interest as seats available, these individuals may be directly appointed to the Panel.

In the setting up of the Disability Panel, adjustments will be made to the recruitment arrangements to ensure access requirements are addressed.

7: Selection Criteria

An assessment of applicants' suitability will be undertaken against the following selection criteria:

- have demonstrated direct or transferable skills or experience in being part of a committee or advisory panel;
- live, work or study in the BHCC area;
- have a lived experience of disability whether personally or through a caring and support role; and
- demonstrated knowledge, experience or an interest in providing independent and/or strategic advice on disability access and inclusion issues that will support one or more of the focus areas of the strategy.

8: Meeting Administration and Protocols

The Panel will be convened by its Chair or their nominee.

The Council will provide administrative support including:

- scheduling meetings of the Panel and provide virtual meeting links where appropriate
- compiling and circulating agenda and attachments to all members
- taking and distributing minutes
- coordinating other meeting arrangements and ensuring the accessibility of meeting procedure and materials

The Panel will meet a minimum of four times a year on dates and at places to be set out in advance for each year. However, additional meetings can be called and must be advised at least 10 working days before the scheduled date.

Where applicable and advised by Panel members, adjustments will be made for all members including adjustments around communications and correspondence and business, for example, a sign language interpreter, printed material in alternate formats, audio captioning services, water bowl for guide dogs, narrative information regarding design plans, PowerPoint presentations prior to meetings and/or any other requirements.

9: Fees

Individual Panel members will be provided with a fee of £40 for each official Panel meeting they attend. The meetings are for a maximum of 3.5 hours with appropriate breaks.

An attendance register will be kept for all meetings for reimbursement purposes.

There may be times when Individual Panel members prepare for a meeting but are unable to attend. In these circumstances a proportional reading time fee can still be paid, in negotiation with the Panel Chair.

Individual Panel members will be reimbursed out-of-pocket expenses incurred by attending Panel meetings such as payment for a personal support worker and transport expenses.

It is expected that Panel members who are organisational representatives will be supported by their organisation to attend where they are a paid member of staff. For volunteer led organisations, the appropriate fee will be paid. The council will ring-fence funding for members of the Disability Panel to recognise the time and expertise of those involved, and to help foster sustainable change.

Recognition can be in variety of forms including but not exclusively training, development, opportunities.

10: Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

Activities of the Panel will be reported 6 monthly to BHCC.

A formal evaluation with the Panel will take place in the last meeting of the year and reported to the council's Corporate Equality Delivery Group and the TECC [Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture] Committee as part of updates on the Accessible City Strategy.

11: Disputes

Where disputes within the Panel occur, it will be the role of the Chair to seek resolution within the group. Where this is not possible, the involvement of the Council Lead for the Disability Panel will engage with the Chair (and wider Panel if appropriate) to determine the most appropriate resolution to the issue.

BHCC reserves the right for the Council Lead for the Disability Panel to follow the process laid out in section 12 of these Terms of Reference and move to dissolve the Panel if they deem this is the most appropriate course of action.

12: Dissolution

If the Panel becomes unable to meet these Terms of Reference or the Council Lead for the Panel determines it is no longer fit for purpose, BHCC reserves the right to dissolve this Disability Panel. It may be replaced in an alternative format or may not be replaced at all.