

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPO) Voice – ‘Nothing about us, without us’**

The statements below are from local disabled people’s organisations, in their own words, to provide challenge for the future and positive developments to date.

#### Manchester People First

Manchester People First is a self-advocacy group for people aged over 18 with a learning disability who live in Manchester. We support people to speak up for themselves so they can have a bigger say in how their lives are lived. We do this by offering training to our members and organisations who work with adults with a learning disability. We give their members somewhere of their own to meet their peers, learn and socialise. We were started 20 years ago by people with learning disabilities themselves and today have over 500 members. During recent engagement session the members highlighted the top five things which they think would make Manchester a better city for people with Learning Disability:

- Consultations - be open to the outcome and take it seriously and plan in enough time to do real consultation as we feel we are not asked or listened to (Nothing About Us Without US)
- Provide Easy Read information for everything - Easy read is for ALL not just people with Learning Disabilities
- Have an assigned social worker - so we can build relationships
- Improve health services (face to face appointments with GP instead of online); waiting times are way too long; what is the money being spent on if not on more staff; cannot keep using COVID-19 as excuse for not treating people;
- Give money to social services to free up beds in hospitals;
- Have a named nurse when in hospital; have a carer with you if in hospital
- Make travelling on public transport easier and safer

#### Manchester Deaf Centre:

Manchester Deaf Centre members were asked to highlight for this report the main barriers and insights for deaf people in the city and in their own words these are:

- Deaf and vulnerable people are slipping through the net and not receiving the support from services that they need
- Accessing information is still a major barrier. Neither local authority or government announcements are regularly interpreted
- A lot of services are not yet back to providing face to face support and are only providing this via online or telephone which can be problematic for Deaf people"
- In the health service - Interpreters not being booked for Hospital or GP appointments. This can lead to miscommunication and emotional upset
- Referrals to the Council's Sensory Services team - they have a long waiting list which causes frustration

- Transport - Trams and buses need more accessible announcements. For example, *"Recently at the tram stop they have added the function where if a tram is cancelled the information will be shown on the digital display"*.
- One client meanwhile, recently advised us.... *"I do live in North Manchester and deaf and while not well have been using primarily BSL and I've been having problems communicating with my GP surgery. I also need to book another test but again the only communication is by phone"*.
- Service exclusion is a recurrent issue. What particularly frustrates here is that we have offered help. The point is that as well as highlighting problems, we do want to assist in finding and delivering solutions.

### Breakthrough UK

Breakthrough UK provide the secretariat for OMDEIP Board and have been instrumental in enabling the work of the Partnership in terms of leadership and structure by working closely with the Council and Partners in key areas such as COVID-10 response and recovery, Digital Inclusion, Engagement, and Work and Skills. They welcome the increased engagement and involvement of DPO's in these areas and recognise the efforts being made by the Council and Partners in recent years to tackle the barriers identified through the OM Disability Plan. They see opportunities for disabled people's increased employment in Manchester, from the vacancies in the hospitality and retail sectors.

Breakthrough UK are very concerned about the increase in mental health issues amongst disabled people's community since COVID-19 and the huge sense of loneliness and isolation being experienced, and also raises the importance of focussed and strategic approach to Disability related digital inclusion, which has all the same reasons for exclusion see in other equality groups but with the added barriers around inaccessibility of websites, software, devices and incompatibility with assistive technologies.

### Manchester Disabled People's Engagement Group

The Manchester Disabled People's Engagement Panel consists of 14 Manchester-based disabled people who have lived experience of disability or long-term health conditions. We use those direct experiences to make Manchester a more accessible place as part of Breakthrough UK's work as one of the leading disabled people's organisations.

We are presently halfway through our lottery funded, 'leaders of the future' project and have connected with a plethora of Manchester-based commissioners and organisations of influence to affect positive physical, attitudinal and educational change for disabled people. We have worked with Manchester City Council in numerous areas including panel discussions around employment, housing, city strategies, parks and leisure amongst others. We are in the process of planning a site visit to Manchester's Heaton Park to work alongside an audit for disabled people focusing on developing park facilities, inclusive playgrounds events and activities, a more inclusive cafe, signage, accessible information and advice, staff training, accessible website, feeling safe around the pandemic, support and accessibility.

Our panel has also worked with the Greater Manchester's Combined Authority, via The Good Employment Charter and the Growth Company supported a recent employment webinar to provide support, help, tips and advice to employers Manchester-based employers are all successes and opportunities to remove barriers in employment of disabled people. We are working alongside The Growth Company to produce a disabled persons employment toolkit to support employers removing barriers to disabled people around employment and promoting good practice.

We have provided a Solutions based report which will be included in Breakthrough UK's feedback to the refreshed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Manchester. This focuses upon the removal of barriers which have been experienced by disabled people directly as a result of COVID-19. Solutions focus input is about to be included in the report which commissioners can consider promoting to support disabled people getting back to employment, education, Health services, independent living, and living confidently and safely during and following the pandemic.

Our recent November panel engaged our lived experience panel members with Manchester housing providers partnership. members with Manchester Housing Providers Partnership. Removing barriers, promote best practice, improve accessibility around applications, access, availability, provision of information/communication, fully adapted properties- Smart Homes Technology and developing an individual profile for people which can be used to understand disabled peoples housing needs if they move to a new home. Capturing information once.

The group are looking to coproduce and develop health services which feel safe as we return to our best chance of normality during the pandemic. We want to focus on what accessible information looks like, having a more diverse, understanding and flexible society which understands and promotes solutions to remove barriers and ensure a more inclusive, progressive society for Manchester and its community.

*"The group are looking to remove barriers including around transportation, information and advice, data collection and understanding COVID-19. Removing all of these areas present huge and significant challenges, which have been heightened as a result of the pandemic."*

#### GMCDP (Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People)

GMCDP are based in Manchester and have a proud 30-year history in the fight for disabled people's rights and independence and are respected locally and nationally for their pioneering work in this area and helping to make Manchester the home of the Disabled rights movement in the 90's. GMCDP are well connected with Council teams and Partners and provide a valuable support and challenge role for the city.

GMCDP is run by disabled people to improve the lives of disabled people through campaigning, advice, partnerships, and peer support. They run many peer-support activities for disabled people in Manchester, who get support through the advice and guidance shared, and together contribute to tackling the challenges and obstacles that disabled people face. Our example of this peer group includes a podcast project called Accessibilia. One of the project's participants describes how it is affected him:

*“I hadn’t been to many disabled peer-support groups, initially because I wasn’t sure if the disabled label fit me comfortably enough. Then my health and mobility worsened and I reclaimed the label proudly and politically”*

*“Attending the GMCDP podcast session changed how I view peer-support groups. I’ve been to a few recently and they have been so much more empowering and enjoyable than I thought. They actually made me feel more confident and more comfortable with how I am.*

GMCDP have led the work to create a national Disability History Archive resulting in a recent £300k award by the Wellcome Trust to continue this important work. The Archive is based at Manchester Central Library.

GMCDP share the concerns of other DPO’s about the impact of COVID-19 on top of already challenging barriers for deaf and disabled people, and in the light of the financial insecurity felt by many in the DPO sector

“Things are getting worse not better for the majority of disabled people with rising rates of poverty, exclusion, poorer life outcomes and increasing hostility all well documented This is also the case for DPOs. The financial crash, followed by a decade of austerity have resulted in many of the gains won by the Disabled people’s movement and DPOs in the 1980’s to mid-2000’s being eroded” (*Understanding the needs of Disabled people’s organisations in England, report 2021, Inclusion London*)

### GM Mayors Disability Panel

Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) led the development and establishing of the GM Mayor’s Disability Panel, which includes representation from Manchester disability groups and chaired by Breakthrough UK, a leading Manchester based Disabled Person’s Organisation.

### Manchester Disabled People’s Access Group (MPDAG)

MPDAG members and associations with other disabled people’s organisations in Greater Manchester and in the UK assist us in identifying impairment specific barriers for people with a range of mobility, hearing, visual and speech impairments, people with learning difficulties, people who are neuro-divergent, such as people with dyslexia, autism, dyspraxia, ADHD and ataxia, people with dementia and with cognitive impairments, people with mental health and long term health issues and people with multiple impairments, including stroke survivors.

As well as identifying barriers for disabled people, we use existing local and national design standards and guidance as well as best practice, to meet the requirements of the Equality Act. We use the social model of disability. MDPAG deals with access to buildings, the environment, transport, information and services. The Built Environment includes any space which is managed and/or developed by planners, designers, highways engineers and other staff who make an impact on the space.

Access issues which we think need addressing in Manchester are:

- Housing: not enough wheelchair accessible housing or adapted housing in private, social and other housing sectors. Places for Everyone and Manchester Local Plan should be at least the same as the London Plan with 10% wheelchair accessible new housing. As most disabled people live in older housing, retrofitting plans should include more adaptation minor and major, of existing housing.
- Issues raised with Manchester Move and concerns regarding long waits for adaptation of existing social housing, some landlords including social landlords refusing to adapt homes.
- There is a need to review and updated Manchester Move website to make it more accessible for disabled people.
- Accessible homes in social housing is restricted to people over 55, meaning families with children. young independent disabled adults and adults under 55 are unable to apply for accessible housing. Assessment issues may also mean that some disabled people are excluded.
- Some disabled people are trapped in housing with unsafe cladding including flats under 18m high.

What MDPAG see as design issues for Manchester:

- Update of Design for Access 2 is urgently needed especially the government will require all planning authorities to produce their own Design Guides following the Planning White Paper. Some issues are not included currently including play facilities for children including play schemes, playgrounds etc.
- Tourism – no Access Guide to Manchester. We are the only large local authority that doesn't have an access guide for visitors, including hotels and other accommodation and services and the Key Routes guide developed for the Commonwealth Games and used to be available on local maps has disappeared. At a recent meeting just before lockdown, we recommended that there is a Key Routes type guide on routes for cyclists as some routes are safer than others. (There are disabled cyclists as well as those using standard cycles)
- Unsafe crossings over Metrolink tracks. Many disabled people including neuro-divergent people, visually impaired people and people with learning difficulties are effectively excluded from some parts of Manchester, particularly Piccadilly Gardens. There are technological solutions to this but Metrolink have refused to consider these although they are being used elsewhere in the country.
- E-scooters and electric vehicles on roads and pavements are hazardous for many disabled people and need to controlled or in the case of e-scooters, continue to be banned from Manchester.
- Digital exclusion for many disabled people. Also, information services which do not provide alternative formats such as text, as many disabled people with communication issues are unable to use digital services or telephones without text.
- Too many new developments approved by the planning department which have access barriers, especially recent high-rise developments in the city centre. Despite comments and responses from MDPAG and other organisations, the inaccessible designs continue to approved.

- Planning officers have not undergone training in access issues for many years and training from disabled people's organisations should be invited to provide a range of training workshops on accessibility for planning, housing, adult care and other departments. Highways have already provided some updates and workshops for their staff.
- Inclusive Design training is required for staff in most city council departments particularly planning, housing and other departments, provided by disabled people's organisations, as national access standards and guidance have changed. New guidance, particularly around pedestrians and cyclists and new issues have also been researched, especially making buildings and the environment more accessible for people who are neuro-divergent.