

Accessible City Strategy Wider Reference Group

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 is registered with 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.

Note:

The term 'disabled' is used throughout this document as defined by The Equality Act 2010, which states that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

In this document the term 'disabled' also includes individuals with long-term limiting or fluctuating health conditions.¹

Purpose of the Group, expectations and how the Group will operate

1. Role of the Group

The role of the Brighton and Hove's Wider Reference Group is to provide a safe, inclusive space for D/deaf, disabled people and neurodiverse people to give their views and participate in discussion on how the City and Council services can become more accessible.

¹ [Disability: Equality Act 2010 - Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to easy-read.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/421212/Disability_Equality_Act_2010_-_Guidance_on_matters_to_be_taken_into_account_in_determining_questions_relati.../easy-read.pdf)

The discussions of and feedback from the Group will inform the recommendations given by the Brighton and Hove's Disability Panel to the Council on improving accessibility in the City and in Council services. The Group's views will also inform the development and delivery of the Council's Accessible City Strategy.

The Group will function as a membership group, whereby there is no set limit to the number of people on the Group. People may join the Group and participate in the work of the Group when and if the focus of the Group's work is relevant. The Group will seek to work in a range of ways, including, but not exclusively, online surveys and meetings and in-person meetings, to maximise inclusivity and opportunity for participation.

In its work Wider Reference Group must recognise it does not have the authority to:

- Expect their views, wholly or in part, to be accepted and acted upon by the Brighton and Hove City 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 the 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 Wider Reference Group outside the remit of the Group.

2. Values and Ground Rules

The values of the Group are:

- Respect
- Honesty
- Openness
- Kindness
- Confidentiality
- Equitability
- Accessibility
- Effectiveness
- Ethicality.

All Members participating in the Group or in the Group's name agree to observe and respect the Group's values.

3. Conduct and Confidentiality

Group Members must declare any conflicts of interest and must adhere to Brighton and Hove City Council's policy and procedure in this respect. Group Members may be given access to information not yet in the public domain or to policies under development. This information must not be shared outside the Group, including within their organisations, in the press or on social media, without prior written permission from the Council. This applies both during and after Members' time on the Wider Reference Group.

4. Membership

The Group is open to:

- Representatives from Disabled People's Organisations that support and empower D/deaf, disabled people and neurodiverse residents of Brighton & Hove – ideally with lived experience of disability themselves.

Membership of the Wider Reference group is limited to one or two representatives per group/organisation.

There is no set term for membership of the Group.

A Member will cease to be a Group Member if they:

- Request to be removed from the Group.
- Do not participate in the work of the Group for more than a year.
- Do not abide by the values and ground rules of the Group.

Members can request to be removed from the Group by contacting the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team by:

- E-mailing edi.officer-disability@brighton-hove.gov.uk
- Telephoning 01273 291952

5. Meeting Administration

The Group will be co-facilitated by a representative of Possability People and the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team.

The Group will be administrated and convened by the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team.

This will include:

- Scheduling meetings of the Group and providing virtual meeting links where appropriate.
- Compiling and circulating agenda and papers to all Members.
- Taking and distributing minutes of meetings.
- Coordinating other meeting arrangements, including ensuring the accessibility of meeting venue, procedures and materials, for example, a British Sign Language interpreter, Makaton interpreter, printed materials in alternative formats (for example Easy Read, Braille), audio captioning services, water bowl for guide dogs, narrative information regarding design plans, PowerPoint presentations prior to meetings and/or any other requirements (i.e. comfort breaks as required).

The Group will meet a minimum of four times a year. The dates and venues for the meetings to be set

Additional meetings can be called and must be advised of at least 10 working days before the scheduled date.

6. Fees

Groups/organisations will be paid a donation of £20 for each meeting that they attend, regardless of whether one or two representatives attend. The organisation is being paid the donation rather than the individuals themselves.

Groups/organisations will be paid a donation of £10 for each survey response they return.

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

7. Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

Activities of the Wider Reference Group will be reported annually to Brighton and Hove City Council's Corporate Equality Delivery Group (CEDG) and the Tourism, Equality, Culture and Communities (TECC) Committee as part of updates on the Accessible City Strategy. This will include a formal evaluation with the Group in the last meeting of the year.

8. Disputes

Should a dispute occur within the Group, the co-facilitators of the Group from Possability People and the Council will seek to mediate and resolve the dispute.

Where this is not possible, the Council Lead for the Disability Panel will engage with the Group to determine the most appropriate resolution to the issue.

In the event of a dispute between the Wider Reference Group and Brighton and Hove City Council arising, a representative agreed by the Group shall provide a written notification to the Council Lead for the Disability Panel with a statement of the nature and grounds of the dispute. The Council Lead for the Disability Panel shall convene a meeting with the representatives of the Group within ten working days. If no agreement is reached because of that meeting, by mutual agreement the parties may seek local mediation. The Council is committed to resolving disputes in partnership with the Group with a view of the parties reaching agreement at the earliest possible stage.

BHCC reserves the right for the Council Lead for the Disability Panel to follow the process laid out in section 9 of these Terms of Reference and move to dissolve the Group if they deem this to be the most appropriate course of action.

9. Dissolution

In the event of Wider Reference Group becoming unable to meet these Terms of Reference or if the Council Lead for the Disability Panel determines it is no longer fit for purpose, Brighton and Hove City Council reserves the right to dissolve the Wider Reference Group. It may be replaced in an alternative format or may not be replaced at all.

10. Expectations of the Disability Panel and the Council

The Disability Panel is expected to:

- Utilise support and subject matter lived expertise provided by the Wider Reference Group.
- Ensure that the expertise of the Wider Reference Group is heard, respected and constructively used at the strategic level.
- Report back to the Wider Reference Group on how their input has been incorporated and what actions or outcomes have been achieved as a result.

Brighton and Hove City Council is expected to:

- Provide a response to issues raised and discussed by the Wider Reference Group in as timely as possible a way, ensuring a clear feedback loop.
- Give due reference to the Wider Reference Group, 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 Wider Reference Group will be shared and subsequently reported to the relevant Brighton and Hove City Council Committees.