

Belper Town Council Accessibility Strategy 2020



Belper Town Council
in partnership with
Accessible Belper



Why have an Accessibility Strategy ?

The United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities sets out the following principles :

1. Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
2. Non-discrimination;
3. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
4. Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
5. Equality of opportunity;
6. Accessibility;
7. Equality between men and women;
8. Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identity

These principles alone provide a compelling argument for work to ensure that they are ingrained in our every day lives and quite clearly extend beyond dealing with issues relating to discrimination.

Although the other protected characteristics in the Equality Act of 2010 are considered of high importance, the Council recognises that discrimination affecting persons with a disabling condition can be the result of both attitude and the physical environment and that this latter element features more prominently than in the other protected characteristics. The Council therefore places a high priority on developing this strategy to fully support people with a disabling condition in playing their full part in society.

The Council is fortunate that it has been able to work as part of the Accessible Belper Group where great strides have already been made towards furthering the rights and needs of people with disabling conditions. The Council also believes that the time is now right not only to re affirm its support for Accessible Belper but also set out its aims and objectives along with a set of actions which will result in positive change for people with disabling conditions over the medium to long term.

The aims of this strategy are very straightforward and are intended to be easily understood across the Community; the better the understanding the more likely that its actions , as set out in the action plan, will be supported. The Council is indebted to Siobhan Fennell who leads Accessible Belper and is a well respected champion of Disability issues and who has provided an enormous amount of challenge, advice, and guidance to the Council. We will continue to work with Accessible Belper and other groups representing people with disabling conditions to keep on raising awareness and introducing initiatives which will make a positive difference to the lives of people with disabling conditions

MISSION STATEMENT

To create a culture of appreciation and understanding of people with disabling conditions and to work towards ensuring that they are fully included in the activities which take place in daily life

AIMS

AIM	Why this is important	Examples :
1. To ensure that the needs of people with a disabling condition are taken in to account when designing and delivering Belper Town Council services	The Council needs to be an exemplar of best practice in order to encourage all sections of the community to support the strategy and take positive action in support of these aims.	Producing Braille and talking book formats of Council leaflets and publications
2. To provide guidance, advice and support to the community in taking positive action on disability	Clear guidance will help to ensure that actions taken in the community are of a consistent standard and reflect best practice so that the experience for the disabled person is of a consistently high standard	Producing guidance for Community Groups on ensuring people with Disabling Conditions can access activities and events.
3. To work effectively with partners and stakeholders to support the needs of people with disabling conditions	The Council cannot work in isolation and will actively seek the advice and expertise of those groups who are expert in the field of Disability and others who share the Council's aims.	Work with Visit Peak District and Derbyshire Tourism to promote Belper as a Disability friendly town
4. To champion the needs of people with disabling conditions	The Council has limited control over some factors which affect the lives of people with disabling conditions. For example, the Council will sometimes need to lobby organisations providing infrastructure, transport etc	Lobbying the County Council to provide more drop kerbs to support Wheelchair Access
5. To celebrate the contribution made to society by people with disabling conditions	Disabled people often overcome extreme adversity and are positive role models for us all. Their achievements should be recognised and celebrated	Introduce an awards scheme to recognise achievements in overcoming Disabling conditions

ACTION PLAN

Attached to this strategy document is a draft action plan which lists a range of actions and initiatives for each aim. Where possible a timescale for their achievement will be set out but it is acknowledged that some actions will form part of an ongoing process. As actions are completed it is anticipated that more will be identified, therefore, the plan will be reviewed frequently to monitor the achievement of actions and make additions and amendments where required.

THE ROLE OF ACCESSIBLE BELPER

Accessible Belper will continue to work with the Council and to help oversee the delivery of the strategy and the action plan. A key part of this will be to help identify and review actions in the action plan as well as providing input into the periodic review of the strategy's aims. The success of the strategy may result in more Disability Groups wanting to engage more fully with the Council and Accessible Belper and it is envisaged that these approaches will be welcomed.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Measuring success is not straightforward in that it is easy to measure inputs e.g. the number of training courses provided to community groups, but measurement of outcomes less so e.g. what practical difference did the courses make? It is the outcomes which are of the greatest importance as they more accurately reflect the experience of persons with a Disabling condition. Therefore, a separate specific section is included in the action plan to develop a SMART set of outcome measures which can be reported authoritatively

REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY

It is envisaged that the strategy and its aims will be reviewed at least annually, possibly as part of a celebration event. The action plan will be monitored more regularly, by the Accessible Belper Group, prior to reporting to the Council.