

manifesto for
action
an independent living strategy for Glasgow



“...ordinary things that most people take for granted, often seem like impossible dreams for disabled people. Like choosing when to go out and be spontaneous, thinking about the job you’d really like to do, going to your child’s parents’ night and not having to meet their teachers in your car, going to the toilet and not having to leave the door open due to poor access.”

GDA Member

What do we need?



There are over a million disabled people in Scotland. Over 100,000 of them live in Glasgow. Disabled people are parents, children, tenants, students, brothers, sisters, partners and friends. We are your neighbours, your colleagues – and maybe you, now or sometime in the future.

Too often disabled people's lives are blighted by poverty and discrimination. There is no excuse for this in our still wealthy country.

All agencies in Glasgow must do everything possible to mitigate against the impact of welfare reform.

Facts

- Disabled people in the UK are twice as likely to be in persistent poverty (defined as living at 60% of median income for 3 out of 4 years) as non-disabled people at 11% and 5% respectively.
- Pensioner poverty continues to be greatest among older and female pensioners, disabled pensioners not in receipt of disability benefits and ethnic minorities.
- Of all children living in poverty, one in three has a disabled parent.

"Poverty limits my choices on top of lack of access. It's layers and layers of problems from my house, to not having transport to the fact that I could not take part in jury service as there was no communication support which I needed as I have a hearing impairment"

GDA Member

Impact of Welfare Reform on disabled people in Glasgow

"In total, we estimate that benefit payments in Glasgow will fall by £114.8 Million"

Fraser of Allander Institute Report to GCC 2012, "The Economic Impact of Welfare Policy Changes on Glasgow"

Benefits affected include Disability Living Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Employment & Support Allowance and Housing Benefit.

"We estimate that total impact of welfare reform on Glasgow will be a loss of 1293 jobs and £33.7 million worth of wage income in the city."



All we are asking for is fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy – the principles behind human rights. We want to have the same choice and control over our lives as any other citizen. **This is what independent living means.** It does not have to mean living by yourself or fending for yourself.

So what do we need? Certainly not pity. We do not even need new rights. We already have the rights we need for independent living – on paper. What we need is ACTION to transform those rights into reality, from paper into practice.

We asked young disabled people ‘if you could do *anything...* what would you do?’ They said:

- have (accessible) public transport so I can go out; travel alone
- have someone to help me communicate with people (not parents)
- get my own house and my own support
- go to the shops; go to the pictures; go to cafes and meet people
- get a job; have control of my own money
- have a computer and use e-mail
- make my own choices and be in control of my life

from ‘CIRCLE Event’

There is so much public partner agencies, policy makers and elected members could do to change disabled people’s lives for the better. That is why we are asking for your support to bring an end to this national scandal... and take ACTION to **make Glasgow’s Independent Living Strategy a reality.**

Independent Living means disabled people of all ages having the same freedom, choice, dignity and control as other citizens across the whole range of life opportunities.

It means having rights to practical assistance and support to participate fully in society and live an ordinary life.

It’s about being free to make your own decisions (with assistance if necessary) about what you want to do and when you want to do it.

What can you do?



Equality and Human rights:

We know economic times are tough and cuts are having a devastating impact across the board. But public partner agencies are compelled to ensure that policy and practice – all of which affect disabled people – complies with equality and human rights legislation. When designing and delivering all services apply critical analysis and understanding that disabled people experience socio-economic inequality as well as additional barriers, disadvantage and discrimination as a result of disability. That means considering equality and human rights when designing and delivering all services.

Action

- Challenge any cuts to policies and services that could further erode disabled people's human rights.
- Immediately establish Equality and Human Rights Committees within Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Community Planning Partnership and public agencies involving disabled people and their organisations.
- Deliver staff training to mainstream Equality and Human Rights principles.
- Involve disabled people using coproduction approaches in setting positive outcomes for policies, services and for independent living.
- Use an equality and human rights based approach when setting funding priorities. This should include independent living outcomes, as defined by disabled people.
- Carry out Equality Impact Assessments to make sure action is taken to reduce the negative impact of changes in policies and services affecting disabled people, including funding for disabled peoples' organisations.



Civic and social participation:

Disabled people have much to contribute to public life and we very much want to make that contribution. We want to be fully part of our communities including decision making. We might even want to become elected members ourselves and need support from the grassroots to political parties to achieve this.

Action

- Encourage and support disabled people's involvement in all structures and mechanisms for decision making, and provide resources for capacity building across the spectrum of involvement, e.g. Community Planning Partnerships and up to elected members.
- Support strategies for an Accessible Glasgow: making the environment, streets, workplaces, shops, pubs, transport and services accessible will ensure that disabled people are able to get out and about and use their spending power to contribute to the economy.
- Involve disabled people from the outset in developing policy and services: we know best what the barriers are, what would remove them and what would not, saving you time and money.
- Support increased funding for disabled people's organisations to provide advocacy, develop self advocacy and peer support.
- Ensure that self-directed support enables and includes opportunities for social and civic participation.
- Support the Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill to ensure participation of disabled people in the design and delivery of services and empowerment of disabled people to have autonomy and achieve independent living.

"Disabled people are very capable of making decisions which are often not in their hands, and are often not given a voice to air their views. Disabled people must be involved in all areas of society in order to show that we are all equal and can play a fulfilling role."

GDA Member

"The clubs for older folk in my area are not accessible to disabled people. I never get out and I feel isolated from my community."

Older GDA Member



Inclusive lifelong learning, education & employability:

As a consequence of Welfare Reform, disabled people are in danger of becoming more unequal and their lives deemed of no value. Work is important but disabled peoples' lives and contributions have worth irrespective of employment status. Inclusive education including lifelong learning is a critical right for disabled people with so much of life being determined by access to education and the opportunities for employment and participation this brings.

Facts

- Young disabled people aged 16 are twice as likely not to be in any form of education, employment or training (NEET) as their non disabled peers. This increases to three times as likely by the age of 19.
- Disabled people are twice as likely as other citizens to have no recognised qualifications.
- Glasgow has the lowest levels of employment of disabled people in Scotland.
- Disabled people are more likely to be in low paid, low skilled jobs.
- Disabled people are only half as likely as non-disabled people to work beyond the age of 50. More than half of non-disabled people aged between 60-64 are employed, compared to only 28% of disabled people of the same age.

"I left school 4 years ago and wanted to do admin.

4 years later I do not really care what I do. I go to interviews and do not get the job.

I know it is discrimination but I cannot help feeling angry and upset with myself."

Young GDA Member

"I'm terrified of being seen as a burden and feeling like I have no option but to go into a home. I grew up in a care home for disabled children and do not want to go back to having no control over my life. I want to meet new people and make friends and keep learning"

Older GDA Member



Action

- Recognise, support & resource capacity building, peer support and collective learning and development as the first step to progression e.g. disabled peoples' organisations.
- Support disabled children and adults to access properly resourced inclusive, mainstream education and community based learning.
- Ensure that self-directed support enables and includes opportunities to take up learning, education and employability support.
- Increase the number of disabled employees at all levels within Glasgow City Council, NHS and public agencies.
- Ring fence funding to enable lifelong learning for its own sake as well as for building skills towards employment. This should offer choice, flexible delivery, and progression.
- Ensure that disabled people are supported to access and sustain opportunities to develop their employability including services which support disabled people to train for and secure voluntary work and employment.

"I had not been involved in learning for a while and my confidence was low. I was used to things not being accessible but participating in the GDA learning courses helped me develop useful new skills and has had a huge impact on my self esteem. I've started University and secured my first work placement. With the right support paid employment is a real option for me."

GDA Member





Personal assistance:

Access to personal assistance is not a luxury. It is fundamentally important for independent living, for having choice and control and for living a full life.

Action

- Improve knowledge and understanding of social work staff to help them carry out consistent assessments which take into account and prioritise the self defined outcomes of disabled people.
- Self Directed Support (SDS) has a role in delivering independent living and is not an end in itself. It is one route to independent living in its widest sense i.e. to have freedom, choice, dignity and control to participate in society and live an ordinary life.
- Remove community care charges: These plunge disabled people further into poverty and create work disincentives. Instead, free up resources by following the One Glasgow approach to better joined-up working and service reform.
- Use resources more creatively by working with other public and voluntary sector partners in line with Christie Commission recommendations.
- Use co-production approaches based on equality and reciprocity when working with individuals on assessing their needs and when developing policy with disabled peoples' organisations.

"I had a real decision to make about whether it was worth my while working as the community care charges are so high. Other people get to keep their wages but disabled people using community care services have to pay charges and the amount all depends on where we stay. We are the only folk who are paying increasing taxes in Scotland. It is not fair and it is not justice."

GDA Member

More actions for independent living:

Action for Communication

- Make sure consultations, events, websites, information and communications are always fully accessible. This should include communication support such as Easy Read, BSL interpreters, note takers, lip speakers, and subtitles.

Action for Advocacy

- Support and resource accessible services to secure rights and entitlements and challenge wrongful cuts to benefits which negatively impact disabled people and Glasgow e.g. Welfare Rights Officers, Advocacy Workers.

Action for Housing

- Increase the proportion and number of barrier free houses available in Glasgow.
- Provide accessible information to disabled people about housing rights and help available with adaptation grants.

Action for Transport

- Work with Community Planning Partners to increase the accessibility of **all modes of transport** for disabled people across Glasgow.
- Remove the charges for Blue Badges for disabled people living in poverty.
- Increase the number of Blue Badge parking spaces.
- Enforce disability equality training in service contracts.

Action for Health

- Work more effectively with Health partners towards ensuring accessible mainstream health services such as GPs, family planning and sexual health clinics for disabled people.
- Make sure all community pharmacies are fully accessible to disabled people.

15 Rights for Independent Living:



These 15 Rights for Independent Living have been agreed by disabled people and their organisations in Glasgow and beyond. GDA has involved over 1600 disabled people and local organisations in developing these essential pillars which are necessary for our full and equal participation within society.

1. A decent income, including state benefits for those unable to work.
2. Accessible and adapted housing.
3. Personal assistance.
4. Accessible and readily available information.
5. Communication support.
6. Advocacy and working towards self advocacy.
7. Technical aids, equipment and technology.
8. Inclusive education and lifelong learning.
9. Equal opportunities for employment and training for work.
10. Accessible and inclusive healthcare provision.
11. Peer support including from disabled people and their organisations.
12. Full access to our environment.
13. Fully accessible and affordable transport.
14. Full social, civic and judicial participation.
15. Legal Rights and legal advice.

Action

- Immediately establish and implement an **Independent Living Strategy for Glasgow** using a coproduction approach with disabled people through Glasgow Disability Alliance, supported by Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living.
- Produce a **Shared Vision for Independent Living** jointly signed by Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Community Planning Partnership and related partners and Glasgow Disability Alliance.
- Work with disabled people and their organisations to establish and develop **fully accessible coproduction approaches** based on equal and reciprocal relationships, mutual respect and building on strengths. Co-planning the process means disabled people being involved from the beginning in setting outcomes.



“If I didn't have access to information, peer support and learning, I would lose control of my life. I wouldn't have choices and I wouldn't have a voice. Without GDA support, I wouldn't have had access to other supports which led me into work. I might not know about Access to Work Direct Payments or SDS. I need ongoing social care support to do everything, from eating a sandwich to using the toilet to delivering presentations. With welfare reform looming and cuts to benefits and services, I am only a few steps away from losing all my positive and productive relationships with colleagues, family, friends and even my partner. I could be reduced to being unable to contribute little or nothing to anyone or anything. Everyone loses.”

GDA Member

“GDA embraces and empowers disabled people through learning, development and employability support. They take everyone's views seriously. Information, advice, support and access to learning have opened doors for me. I am now involved in so many things and even working part time and this would never have happened if it had not been for Glasgow Disability Alliance.”

GDA Member

If you have a question about anything in this Manifesto, come and ask us. We work daily with disabled people at the 'grassroots'. They can tell you about the barriers they experience to independent living and how to remove them. Delivering Independent Living can save money as well as improve services.

Please commit to this manifesto. Sign up to take ACTION for an Independent Living Strategy for Glasgow and work with GDA to take this forward.

Thank you for your support!

About Glasgow Disability Alliance

Glasgow Disability Alliance is a disabled peoples' organisation. GDA is controlled by a board of disabled people elected from the membership – currently over 1600 disabled people, plus many organisations of and for disabled people. Our mission is to act as the collective, representative voice of disabled people in Glasgow and surrounding areas, promoting equality, rights and social justice. Our priorities are to help disabled people to transform their lives, fulfil potential and be active contributors to society and to transform services so that disabled people achieve choice, control, dignity, freedom and a fair and equal chance at living a full life. We work in partnership with service providers, representing the key issues and priorities of disabled people.

Contact us for more information

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