



**Glasgow Disability Alliance**  
Confident Connected Contributing

# Disabled People Make Glasgow Too!

Manifesto for Scottish Local  
Government Elections 2022



# Disabled People Make Glasgow Too!

Glasgow Disability Alliance is an organisation run by disabled people, for disabled people.

We are a diverse community of 5500 disabled people with all kinds of impairments and conditions.



## That is a lot of voters!

Our common bond is our shared experience of disabling barriers and of working together on solutions to break these down.

GDA supports disabled people to connect with each other, to build confidence to tackle the barriers we face, to speak out and influence change, so we can contribute and participate in our own lives and in our city– including the decisions which affect us.

Disabled people face barriers, inequality and poorer outcomes across all areas of life. Lack of understanding and inadequate resources prevent us from accessing vital services and information; inaccessible housing, transport, and environments mean we are unable to participate in our communities; lack of equal opportunities in education, employment; civic participation and social connections increase poverty of income and opportunity and mean we cannot make the contributions we want to make.

**These are inequalities that Glasgow City Council has the power to immediately mitigate and reduce - working with DPOs!**

Disabled people and people with long term conditions make up at least 25% of Glasgow's population.

**Disabled people make Glasgow too!**

Exacerbated by austerity and previously described as a "Human Catastrophe" by the United Nations, these inequalities have been supercharged by the Covid-19 pandemic, with responses eroding rights and leaving disabled people behind.<sup>1</sup> Find out more in GDA's Covid-19 report '**Supercharged: a human catastrophe**'.<sup>1b</sup>

For decades, disabled people have been striving to influence change: to eradicate barriers, accelerate equality and realise our Human Rights.

**It is clearer now more than ever that disabled people's equality will benefit the whole of society.**

# GDA's Manifesto for the Scottish Local Government elections 2022

The pandemic has taken a gruelling toll on those who were already worst off.

We must act now to supercharge disabled people's voices, and lived experience expertise: to mitigate new and widened inequalities, and ensure disabled people are never again left behind.

- For too long disabled people have been told our priorities and needs are too expensive.
- For too long we have been made to feel like a burden and that we should reduce dependency on the state.
- This needs to change.

Our Manifesto Asks have been co-designed with disabled people.

They highlight the key inequalities facing disabled people in our city:

## Ask 1:

Reduce Social Isolation and maximise disabled people's participation.

## Ask 2:

Deliver Health and Social Care which upholds rights, advances equality and supports Independent Living.

## Ask 3:

Put Disability at the heart of tackling poverty in Glasgow.

## Ask 4:

Reduce the disability employment gap in Glasgow.

## Ask 5:

Develop and implement a Just Transition to Net Zero that delivers fairness and tackles inequality.

## Ask 6:

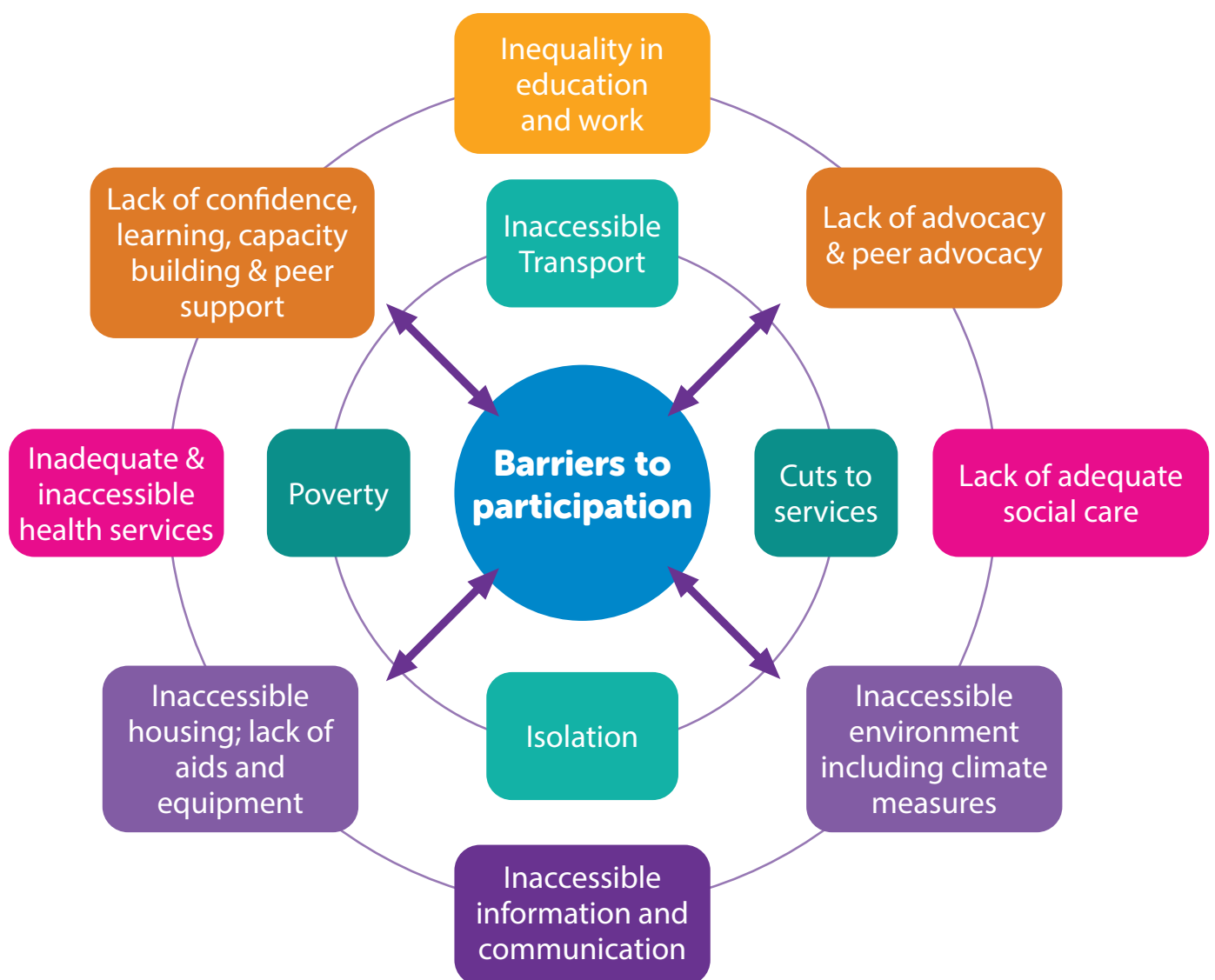
Improve accessibility, affordability, choices and standards across the housing sector in Glasgow for disabled people.

# Ask 1: Reduce Social Isolation and maximise disabled people's participation.

The findings from the recently published Participation Report of the Disability Workstream (Glasgow Social Recovery Taskforce)<sup>2</sup> clearly demonstrate that disabled people face huge and enduring barriers to participation – in our own lives, in the lives of our communities and in wider society.

GDA's own research pre and during the Covid-19 pandemic with thousands of disabled people paints a stark picture of isolation and exclusion:

- **82%** were concerned about isolation over the past two years.
- **80%** were not aware of any local support services they could access during the pandemic and lockdown – despite the tremendous efforts of local communities.
- Pre-pandemic, **71%** found it difficult to participate in their local communities, due to physical barriers, stigma, lack of accessible information.<sup>3</sup>





# Disabled People Make Glasgow Too!

If we cannot take part in our own lives, our families and our communities, how can we participate in key decision making across the city?

We need to create the right conditions for inclusive and accessible ways of working; ways which encourage, empower and enable all citizens to participate in designing the services they need. And this must include disabled people. If we get it right for those who have been impacted most by brutal cuts and Covid-19 inequalities, then we'll get it right for everyone.



**Embedding disabled people's voices and lived experience in decision making processes, will eradicate barriers and inequalities so we can Make Glasgow flourish.**

## Calls to action: Participation

- A. Invest in disabled people led organisations** to build "community" connections, facilitate peer support and belonging, empower disabled people to understand and claim human rights and to take up roles at all levels in Glasgow.
- B. Involve disabled people's lived experience** throughout planning, delivery, and evaluation of policies, services and decisions which affect us e.g. Community Plan, Education, H&SC Strategic Plan, Citizen's Panels, PB and Area Partnerships.
- C. Recognise disabled people as a community of identity** alongside communities of place. Build local and city wide understanding and "equalities competence" to enable disabled people to be equally involved in planning solutions.
- D. Remove barriers to disabled people's participation** e.g. provide free transport, accessible information, communication support and personal assistance.
- E. Develop and resource inclusive approaches to participation**, including in-person and digital opportunities.
- F. Engage with DPOs.** Public service leaders should take up Disability Equality and Participation training delivered by DPOs.

## Ask 2: Deliver Health and Social Care which upholds rights, advances equality and supports Independent Living.

Disabled people fought for decades for the right to live in our communities, with support, choice and control - now enshrined in the Self-Directed Support (Scotland) Act.<sup>4</sup> Austerity and cuts eroded these human rights, leaving disabled Glaswegians isolated, in crisis, without even basic needs being met.

### Then Covid-19 landed.

The pandemic emergency meant that 1884 disabled people's social care packages were cut, with little or no warning or time to plan alternatives.<sup>5</sup> Despite the understandable cause, there was a negative impact with people describing feeling "desperate".

Lack of alternative provisions or explanations for how cuts were made, have left disabled people confused, let down and feeling extremely vulnerable.

GDA research with disabled people receiving social care support<sup>6</sup> found that:

- **83%** did not get the support they need when they need it.
- **74%** did not get the support they need to be included in their community.
- **47%** of disabled people GDA spoke to during the pandemic said they were worried about their social care needs.

Inclusion Scotland found that **71%** of disabled people do not get the support they need to live independently.<sup>7</sup>

**Thresholds and eligibility for social care are higher than ever before** - social care merely enables us to survive rather than live. Many disabled people receive no social care support due to "critical" thresholds. Others report not yet securing pre-pandemic levels of support.

**Disabled citizens who do receive social care face a backdoor tax on human rights**, making vital support unaffordable. Social care charges push us further into poverty and isolation.



Disabled people describe human rights being undermined by the drive to 'Maximise Independence'. This policy direction appears to originate from NHS rehabilitation approaches based on the medical model, which focus disability on the disabled person and not external barriers. Assessments that focus on the amount of tasks we can do for ourselves and what families, neighbours and communities can do for free, undermine our choice, control and autonomy. Independent Living is actually about the support we need to live our lives, like other citizens.

**We urgently need Glasgow City Council to really listen to disabled people's concerns around social care and learn from our lived experience.**

## **Calls to action: Health & Social Care**

- A. Halt "Maximising Independence Programme" and re-align the policy intent** and direction. Deliver human rights and Independent Living, as defined by disabled people, enshrined in Scottish legislation and previously adopted by Glasgow City Council.
- B. Reinstate social care which was cut, cancelled or paused at outset of Lockdown** – without need for re-assessment. Restart assessments for people not currently in the system.
- C. Urgently fast track and resource disabled people's access to vital health services** cut or reduced due to Covid-19 including face to face and online appointments, treatments, medication. Include access to lower level interventions and mental health and wellbeing supports.
- D. Enable disabled people to be accompanied at medical appointments** including on admission to hospital. Enable access to communication support and necessary equipment, e.g. wheelchairs, hoists.
- E. Resource and provide better access to specific Covid-19 vaccines and treatments** such as biological medicines and anti-virals for those at highest risk of becoming seriously ill. Provide free FFP2 masks and LFTS to keep disabled people safe.
- F. Work alongside Glasgow DPO Network to embed actions from Disability Workstream** including disability equality training for health and social care staff at all levels.
- G. Ensure disabled people's involvement in policies, services and decisions about our care** from individuals to IJB decision making, supported by DPOs. Build trust and relationships that embed sharing power and enable the difficult conversations necessary to deliver change.

## Ask 3: Put Disability at the heart of tackling poverty in Glasgow.

**57%** of the 6000+ disabled people GDA spoke to at the height of the pandemic were worried about money and/or access to their money.

### Disabled people have higher costs of living than non-disabled people.<sup>8</sup>

- average extra costs are £583 a month.
- 1 in 5 face extra costs of over £1,000 a month, even with benefits designed to meet those costs.
- on average, £100 for a non-disabled adult equals £68 for a disabled person.

- Having one disabled child costs an average of £528 extra a month.
- Almost 1-in-4 families with disabled children have extra costs of over £1,000 a month.
- Children in disabled households make up 40% of all children in poverty in Scotland.
- 47% of children in disabled households do not have anyone in work.<sup>9</sup>

### 62% of working age people referred to foodbanks were disabled.<sup>10</sup>

- Disabled households are almost three times more likely to use foodbanks than other low income households.
- GDA made 2800 deliveries of food and essential to people unable to access these during the pandemic.
- Pre-pandemic disabled people identified barriers to accessing Foodbanks – transport, health, lack of social care and inability to carry packages.

### Disabled people are more likely to experience fuel poverty as their fuel needs are inevitably higher:<sup>11</sup>

- Charging vital healthcare, mobility and communication equipment.
- Requiring warmer homes for health reasons; increased hygiene and laundry needs.
- Increased home working for disabled people.
- Disabled households are more costly for fuel providers to support. Those with the greatest need for support are often those not accessing it.



## Poverty is often viewed through too narrow a lens.

Despite the evidence, many poverty initiatives fail to recognise the particular needs of disabled people or the issues that contribute to disabled people's poverty.

This means they often fail to address the poverty experienced by disabled people and their families.

In Glasgow, disabled people are not only facing these higher costs. Amongst other things, they are being charged for Blue Badges, vital Social Care support – a tax that only disabled people face, and increasingly, residential parking places – all within the remit of the City Council.

We call on Glasgow City Council to put disability at the heart of tackling poverty and commit to working with GDA and others to develop policies and actions that take account of disabled people's lived experience.



## Calls to action: End Poverty

- A. Work with DPOs to co-design a Glasgow Disability Poverty Reduction Plan.** Plan strategic actions to meet targets that address the specific impacts of poverty on disabled people e.g. fuel poverty measures, Blue Badges and residential & workplace parking.
- B. Invest in and develop flexible and accessible disabled people led welfare rights advice, information and representation services,** such as Rights Now.
- C. Ensure that the income maximisation services provided by existing financial support services, including home energy advice, are accessible to disabled people.**
- D. Maximise uptake by disabled people of all eligible income related support and automatic entitlements** e.g. council tax, housing benefit, school uniforms.
- E. End all charges for health & social care services** – these are a backdoor tax on disabled people's human rights.

## Ask 4: Reduce the disability employment gap in Glasgow.

**The Disability Employment Gap is the difference between the employment rates of disabled people and non-disabled people.**

In 2020, 80.6% of non-disabled people in Scotland were employed, compared to 47.2% of disabled people.

Not only are disabled people less likely to have a paid job, but when they do, disabled people earn substantially less than their non-disabled peers, even when they have equivalent qualifications. This does not reflect less willingness to work. More disabled people want to work than non-disabled people who are “inactive”.<sup>12</sup>

**During the past 2 years, the disability employment gap widened due to disabled people losing their jobs.**

During the same period, demands on GDA's Employability support service increased. This is in part due to disabled people being disproportionately represented in the sectors most impacted such as hospitality, tourism and retail.

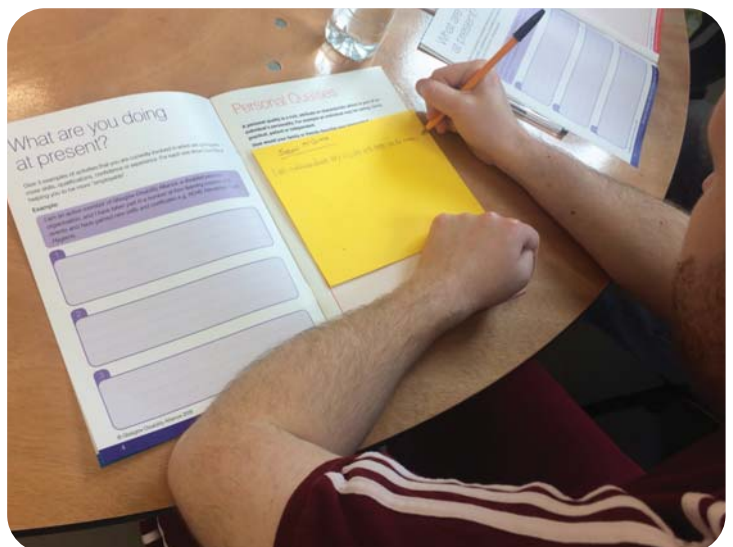
**GDA also saw a significant increase in requests for support from disabled people in work who were facing a range of challenges:** potential redundancy; concerns about safe working practices; changes to duties, working patterns or hours; support for home working, childcare issues, Access to Work challenges and so on.

To halve the Disability Employment Gap by 2038, would require an increase of around 130,000 disabled people in employment in Scotland.

**This requires an increase of approximately 17,300 disabled people in employment in Glasgow by 2038.**<sup>13</sup>

### Employerability in Action

GDA provides support to employers, including Glasgow City Council, who ask for help to understand and implement best practice in the recruitment and retention of disabled people. Such training to employers helps them to have a more diverse workforce.



# A new approach is needed.

Disabled people have been failed for many years by organisations that are funded to provide employability support.

Services that are not accessible and that do not meet communication, transport, or other support needs have consistently failed to secure good job outcomes for disabled people.

What is needed is employability support that values disabled people and sees their potential rather than a “problem that needs to be fixed”.

Employability support has to be more than helping individuals to produce a CV or to prepare for an interview: it must help people get into secure, well paid work with employers committed to providing reasonable adjustments and support in the workplace.

“No-one Left Behind” is a new, Scotland-wide, locally co-designed, approach to employability, supporting all disadvantaged groups in the labour market.

We need “No-one Left Behind” partners in Glasgow to ensure disabled people, are supported to access the right support to move towards, into, and progress within employment.

**We call on Glasgow City Council to improve and expand on co-design approaches to improve employment outcomes for disabled people and reduce the disability employment gap.**



## Calls to action: Employment

**A. Increase recruitment and retention of disabled people in employment,** particularly within Glasgow City Council and wider Community Planning Partners and ensure that employment is aligned to the Fair Work framework.

**B. Establish a Glasgow DPO Employerability Hub:** a hub of expertise led by DPOs to provide employers with training, advice, information and support on best practice in the recruitment, retention and progression of disabled people.

**C. Improve the accessibility and performance of employability support provision** across the city to better meet the needs of disabled job-seekers.

**D. Increase availability of accessible childcare and social care** for disabled children and disabled parents.

## Ask 5: Develop and implement a Just Transition to Net Zero that delivers fairness and tackles inequality.

Despite the obligations in international human rights law, disabled people have been perhaps the most overlooked group in climate change planning, policy making and negotiations.<sup>14</sup> The impacts of Climate Change are not experienced equally, which is why we believe climate justice is an equality and human rights issue.

Very little research and evidence on climate change focuses on the rights of disabled people and how they might be affected by climate impacts, policies or initiatives and disabled people have remained largely invisible to climate adaptation efforts.<sup>15</sup>

### COP26 impacted on disabled people living in Glasgow.

GDA members living in the Exclusion Zone reported being imprisoned in their own home; social care workers unable to get to them; unable to attend essential appointments; increased barriers to moving around the city due to road closures and protests and the struggle to find information in advance they could access.

GDA is increasingly hearing from disabled people facing climate change themed hostility and aggression, i.e. eco-ableism because they need to use cars, plastic straws, buy pre-prepared food and so on.

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that disabled people were far less visible - therefore easier to ignore when implementing changes to the public realm.

GDA's Participatory Budgeting research pre-pandemic found over 400 examples of barriers in the physical environment.<sup>16</sup>

- Transport was cited over **200** times as a barrier and a solution to participation.
- **71%** had difficulty participating in local community activities due to lack of access. This increased to 80% during the pandemic.

**The drive to 'net zero' is going at a faster pace than the drive to improve access needed for disabled people.**





## 'Spaces for People' had very limited involvement of disabled people and only after decisions were made.

Despite reassurances that all SfP measures were temporary, most were made permanent with little or no meaningful involvement of disabled people.

Inaccessible consultations do not enable those most impacted to contribute their lived experience.

The reduction in cars and taxis permitted to drive into the city centre, removal of disabled parking bays, inaccessible public transport, increased pedestrianisation, poor design of cycle lanes and crossing points, all contribute to increased barriers to disabled people accessing their city.

## Let's make the race to rights for disabled people as important as the race to reach net zero!

An inclusive codesign forum, meaningfully involving disabled people and DPOs and working alongside Glasgow City Council would more effectively consider and address disabled people's needs.



**We call for a commitment to involve disabled people in co-designing solutions, policies and monitoring systems that tackle climate change.**

## Calls to action: Just Transition

**A. Support disabled people's participation in co-designing inclusive policies and actions to achieve a Just Transition** across the full range of interrelated policy areas e.g. employment, social care, transport, housing, education.

**B. Co-design with disabled people and DPOs the citywide and local plans, actions and decisions to tackle climate change** e.g. Low Emission Zones, Active Travel Schemes, Avenues Project, Liveable Neighbourhoods.

**C. Take action and invest in communities of identity** as well as place to avoid unintentionally widening inequalities in public realm and climate action schemes.

## Ask 6: Improve accessibility, affordability, choices and standards across the housing sector for disabled people in Glasgow.

Glasgow's Strategic Housing Investment Plan, 2022-27 sets out how £480 million will be invested in development projects across the city, with potential to deliver over 6500 new affordable homes.<sup>17</sup>

Although this includes plans for 'wheelchair accessible' housing, we know from disabled people that minimum building standards fail to meet disabled people's actual needs. It is not enough to simply be able to get through the front door. Kitchens, bathrooms and living accommodation should all be accessible and planning should include housing for disabled people with families.

**GDA is supporting increasing numbers of disabled people who are in dire housing need. Disabled people who:**

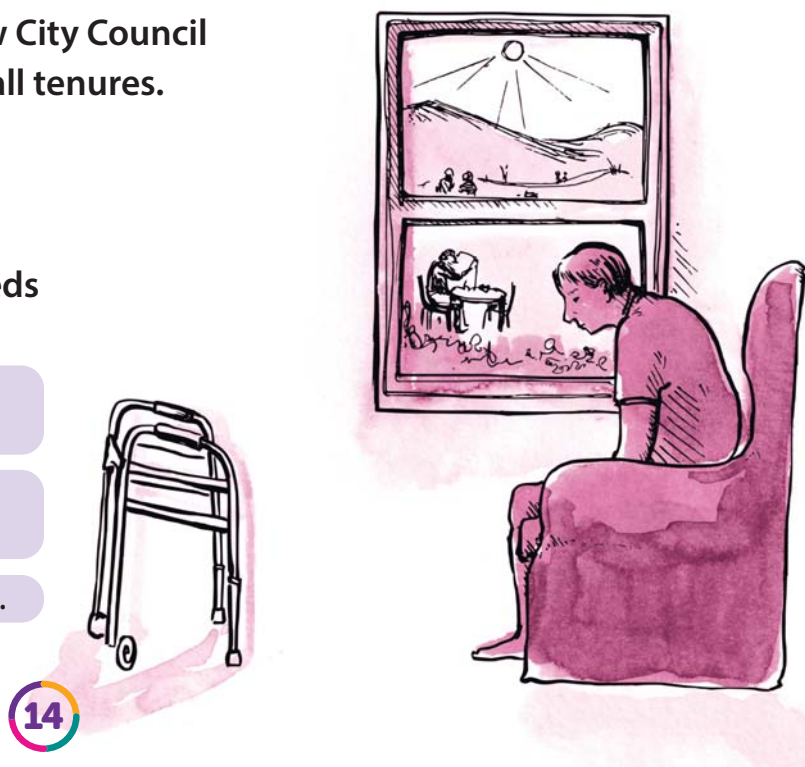
- have not been able to shower for 2 years.
- cannot access their own kitchen.
- cannot safely enter or leave their own home without assistance.
- have social care needs that are exacerbated by and in some cases due to their poor housing situation.
- cannot take refuse from their house to the bin store and/or put bins out for collection.
- are dealing with increasing levels of anti-social behaviour.
- are living with disrepair and need for urgent adaptations.

**Disabled people urgently need Glasgow City Council to address these housing issues across all tenures.**

### Disabled people experience intersecting barriers

**Not having a home that meets their needs often results in:**<sup>18</sup>

- declining health, increased social care needs and poorer mental health.
- being unable to work, volunteer, or take up educational opportunities.
- inability to participate fully in family life.



We need Glasgow City Council to ensure that disabled people's right to an accessible home that meets their needs can be realised.

## Calls to action: Housing

- A. Increase targets for accessible, barrier free, "houses for life" available in Glasgow:** go beyond minimum standards and specifications in new build housing and/or housing developments or adaptations.
- B. Provide accessible information and support to disabled people about housing rights and help available** e.g. adaptation grants, dealing with antisocial behaviour and resolving neighbour disputes.
- C. Work with DPOs as stakeholders and partners to ensure disabled people's housing needs are met** within Glasgow Strategic Housing Investment Plan.
- D. Invest in maintenance, improvements and adaptations** of disabled people's homes.
- E. Ensure that cleansing and bulk uplift services meet the needs of disabled people.**

## We need our elected members to:

- ✓ **Recognise all the barriers we face.**
- ✓ **Work with us to remove these barriers.**
- ✓ **Help Disabled People Make Glasgow too!**

### End notes:

1. <https://gda.scot/resources/disability-microbriefing-the-disproportionate-impact-of-covid-19-on-disabled-people/>
- 1b. <https://gda.scot/resources/supercharged-a-human-catastrophe/>
2. <https://gda.scot/resources/transforming-participation-for-disabled-people-in-glasgow-beyond-covid-19/>
3. <https://gda.scot/resource-category/participatory-budgeting/?resource-content-type&search>
4. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/guide-social-care-self-directed-support-scotland-act-2013/>
5. BBC Disclosure programme <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-52415302>
6. GDA social care listening event with Cllr Mhairi Hunter and social care survey, November 2018.
7. <https://inclusionscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022-CRPD-Shadow-Report.pdf>
8. <https://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/extra-costs/disability-price-tag/>
9. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2021>
10. <https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/05/State-of-Hunger-2021-Report-Final.pdf>
11. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evidence-review-lived-experience-fuel-poverty-scotland/>
12. <https://www.gov.scot/collections/labour-market-statistics/>
13. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-disabled-people-employment-action-plan/>
14. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/how-climate-change-disproportionately-impacts-those-disabilities>
15. Inclusion Scotland, It's Our Planet Too: Climate Change, Disabled People and Climate Action in Scotland
16. <https://gda.scot/resources/budgeting-for-equality/>
17. <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=44876&p=0>
18. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/housing-and-disabled-people-scotland-hidden-crisis-executive-summary.pdf>

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