



# Bristol City Council, Disability Equity Action Plan 2025-2028

## Introduction

Bristol City Council has a statutory duty under the Equality Act (2010) to provide anticipatory reasonable adjustments for Disabled people and to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Disability Equity is crosscutting across several of the priorities included in our Corporate Strategy (2025-30) such as improving equity of outcomes in employment, improving health and wellbeing and creating good quality homes. Our Equity and Inclusion Strategic Framework 2023-27 states that we will ‘recognise and remove barriers faced by Disabled people, provide flexible services, communicate in a range of accessible formats, and promote the Social Model of Disability.’ With the Disability Equality Commission concluding its work in December 2025, this action plan sets out a clear framework to continue, monitor and measure progress on priority actions aimed at removing barriers for Disabled people across the city.

Actions are aligned to priority areas such as adult social care, children and education, transport, economy and more. Bristol City Council is committed to the Social Model of Disability which recognises the right to self-identify as a Disabled person and that people are Disabled by barriers in society such as lack of physical access and lack of accessible communication, not by their impairment (including mental, physical, sensory, health conditions, learning differences among others). This action plan outlines the collective commitments across Bristol City Council’s (BCC) services to embed accessibility and champion Disability Equity in the way we work and function.



## **Governance and Accountability**

Progress of the agreed actions will be monitored via Equality Action Plans and the Equity and Inclusion Strategic Leadership Board. Progress will be evaluated against timescales and agreed milestones. A summary of workstreams will be included in the Equity and Inclusion Annual Report which is reviewed by Full Council. Reporting leads are accountable for implementing actions within their respective areas of responsibility.

## **Acronyms**

BDEF – Bristol Disability Equality Forum

BDPON - Bristol Disabled People Organisation Network

HLS – Housing and Landlord Services

ISO – International Organisation for Standardisation

HoS – Head of Service

WCGAG – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

WECIL – West of England Centre for Inclusive Living



## Action Plan

Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
<b>Policy, Strategy and Digital</b>			
<b>Digital Strategy and Transformation</b>	Recruit and embed an assistive technology role, improving the pace and consistency of digital accessibility and working to remove technological barriers to inclusion within the council. This includes supporting timely provision of reasonable adjustments, further developing our standard catalogue of assistive technology, and providing advice and support to work designing, procuring or developing internal systems.	Q4 25/26	HoS - Digital Strategy and Transformation
<b>Digital Strategy and Transformation, Procurement</b>	Review procurement, contract management, development and testing processes to make sure that accessibility standards are consistently achieved for digital tools and services. For new web services we will ensure compliance to WCAG 2.2 Level AA (with WCAG 2.1 Level AA as a minimum) and in processes for websites, apps, software and hardware we will align with the principles of British Standard ISO 30071-1:2019.	Q1 26/27	HoS - Digital Strategy and Transformation



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
	<p>For legacy services we will work to modernise them and ensure compliance wherever technically possible, noting that in some rare instances it may be impossible or create an unsustainable financial burden to resolve every single issue. Where this is the case, we will work to mitigate and impacts and provide clear alternative routes to access services.</p>		
<p><b>Equity and Inclusion</b></p>	<p>Establish an effective engagement approach with BDPON so that relevant organisations and individuals can meaningfully contribute on a strategic and policy level. Review the approach with BDPON on an annual basis.</p>	<p>Q4 25/26</p>	<p>HoS - Equity, Data and Performance</p>
<p><b>One City</b></p>	<p>Bristol City Office will engage with BDPON to embed the One City Plan. They will ensure representation of Disabled people at City Gatherings and within key elements of the One City Approach, including work to plan and deliver on the plan's four key Missions for the city.</p>	<p>Ongoing to 2028</p>	<p>HoS - City Office</p>



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<b>Communications</b>	The council will improve awareness and understanding of accessible communications across the council, embedding the key principles from the 'Accessible communications policy' and monitoring via the policy review process. This will include a priority to more commonly make Easy Read and other formats available for people with learning differences, and to further encourage use of British Sign Language, as we know these have been priority areas for Disabled people.	Ongoing to 2028	HoS - Policy, Strategy and Communications
<b>Communications</b>	The council will monitor engagement with Disabled people-led organisations via reporting on the Communication Strategy, identifying ways to increase engagement if needed.	Q4 26/27	HoS - Policy, Strategy and Communications
<b>Legal and Democratic Services</b>			
<b>Democratic Engagement</b>	Councillors will commit to applying a disability equality perspective grounded in the Social Model of Disability, when making decisions to ensure an inclusive approach. Councillors will also commit to engaging with Disabled people led organisations on all Disability-related and relevant corporate issues. This will include a	Ongoing to 2028	Councillors



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
	commitment to increasing their awareness of the specific needs arising from a range of impairments.		
<b>Democratic Engagement</b>	All policy committees will work with BPDON to explore how co-production can be appropriately embedded in the development of policy across each of the committees. This will take the Adult Social Care Co-production Policy as a starting point but will recognise that the approach to co-production will be different for different policy areas. This will be added to the work programme setting workshop agenda in January 2026, and policy committee chairs will provide an update to their committees in June/July about clear Disability equity actions to embed.	Ongoing to 2028	Policy Committee Chairs
<b>Leaders Office</b>			
<b>Leader</b>	The Leader meets every quarter with Disabled people led organisations. The Leader will take a proactive approach to ensuring a wide range of views are represented, taking into consideration different impairment needs.	Ongoing to 2028	Leader



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
<b>Housing</b>			
<b>Housing and Landlord Services (HLS)</b>	<p>HLS are currently recruiting to the newly formed Resident &amp; Community Panel - (replacing the previous housing management board). We commit to ‘positive action’ within our recruitment to ensure we have meaningful representation of Disabled residents. Two key elements of the panel recruitment process is that it is values based with lived expertise as a core essential criterion to help address under-representation.</p> <p>To ensure the panel is inclusive, we’ve developed membership criteria that prioritises the lived expertise of disability. This includes Disabled residents themselves or representatives from community organisations who can speak to these experiences.</p> <p>We have a comprehensive support offer for panel members including payment for involvement, travel and</p>	Q3 25/26	Director Homes and Landlord Services



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
	<p>carers expenses, access to IT, training, the option of online or in person meetings and documents offered in alternative formats. We will follow the council's <u>Accessible Meetings Guide</u> and <u>Accessible Communication Policy</u> throughout.</p> <p>We will work with panel members some of which will be representative groups to identify any additional barriers to their participation in the panel as well as consider barriers for resident engagement with the panel so these can be addressed early. The panel will also be involved in the co-design of their priorities and agendas, based on what matters most to residents, including disabled residents. The Policy and Engagement team are working to establish a positive working relationship with Bristol Older People's Forum and BDEF, to create two-way dialogue around residents needs and opportunities to help shape housing policy.</p>		



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
<b>Housing and Landlord Services (HLS)</b>	<p>We recognise that residents in our high-rise blocks with mobility issues face challenges with appropriate mobility scooter storage. In order to mitigate fire risk Social Landlords are expected to exhaust all avenues including punitive remedies which may include removal of items. Current policies focus on enforcement – HLS commit to a gap analysis of the current policy and practice, capture learning and best practice to inform change. We aim to work proactively with Disabled residents facing mobility issues to inform &amp; support, in order to avoid enforcement.</p>	Q4 2026/2027	Director Homes and Landlord Services
<b>Housing and Landlord Services (HLS)</b>	<p>HLS will commit to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving training and understanding across the service of ‘hidden impairments’ facing both residents and staff.</li> <li>• Promoting the new Reasonable Adjustment e-learning and encourage trauma informed practice across the service.</li> </ul>	Q4 2026/2027	Director Homes and Landlord Services



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review policies that support accessible service delivery including, our tenancy sustainment policy and gain access policy.</li> <li>• Develop policies that support accessible service delivery including a reasonable adjustment policy, Heat Network Vulnerability Policy and Priority Services Register and a Data Governance Framework (based on Housing Ombudsman guidance), which is centred on the proper collection, use and refresh of resident information, including disability, vulnerability and access needs.</li> </ul>		
<b>Housing Delivery</b>	<p>To maximise the number of specialist and accessible homes in the city through new housing delivery and adaptations to existing housing supply. This will be achieved through the delivery of the Supported Housing Delivery Plan, rigorous implementation of Local Plan accessible housing policy requirements and the continued provision of the Council’s Aids and Adaptations Service. The delivery of home adaptations is dependent on the level of funding provided through</p>	Q4 2026/2027	Head of Housing Delivery



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
	the annual allocation of Disabled Facilities Grant and Housing Revue Account. Performance around new delivery of accessible homes and the level of adapted homes will be monitored and reported annually.		
<b>Economy of Place</b>			
<b>City Transport</b>	City Transport will continue collaborating with Disabled people and their organisations ensuring their perspectives are meaningfully integrated across all major transport workstreams and reflected in future proposals. This will be done through the Disabled People Strategic Transport forum and through operational schemes like the liveable neighbourhood schemes.	Q4 2027	Local Transport Manager
<b>City Transport</b>	City Transport will explore options for how blue badge holders and Disabled drivers can share their experiences to enable feeding into future transport related decision making.	Q4 2026	Local Transport Manager



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<b>Transport/ economy</b>	Review and upgrade wayfinding within Bristol including Legible City totems and fingerposts as well as the wider active travel network.	Q4 2027	Local Transport Manager, Service Manager – City Centre and High Streets
<b>Economy</b>	Deliver enterprise and business support which focuses on under representation from equalities groups – with a focus on ensuring access to support and advice for disabled clients.	Q4 2027	HoS - Economic Development
<b>Economy</b>	Working with Disabled people we will prepare a vision and action plan to the Bristol One City Economy and Skills Board to ensure that disability equity and the opportunity of working with Disabled people can be embedded in the economic development and regeneration of the city. This will include engagement, consultation, delivery and working with development and investment partners.	Q4 2026	HoS – Regeneration, HoS – Economic Development
<b>Property, Assets and Infrastructure</b>			



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
<b>Corporate Landlord</b>	Ensure that each service’s annual Corporate Landlord Strategic Asset Management Plan incorporates the required accessibility requirements (under the Equalities Act 2010) to ensure compliance – for each building.	Q4 2027	HoS – Corporate Landlord
<b>Children and Education</b>			
<b>Digital Hub and Continuing Professional Development</b>	<p>We will ensure that the development of our new digital resource hub and equality and inclusion training for all staff includes a focus on the needs of Disabled people. This will be achieved through co-design with the Disabled People’s Network and collaboration with specialist partners. We will seek input from the Centre for Deaf to provide resources for supporting young people and draw on guidance from the Alliance for Inclusive Education.</p> <p>We will engage with the Bristol Disability Equality Forum (BDEF), to identify high-quality resources and best practice, and capture tools from the autism team to strengthen our offer.</p>	Q4 2025/26	HoS – Permanency and Specialist Services, HoS - City Education, Skills and Learning, Principle Social Worker



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
	<p>The Council also recruits a number of specialist teams, such as through the Bristol Autism Team and Sensory Support team which will contribute.</p> <p>Engagement and resource planning will be agreed by the end of Q1 2026, with initial hub content and CPD modules launched by Q3 2026.</p>		
<p><b>Inclusive Recruitment and Progression</b></p>	<p>Our workstream group will continue to progress the aim to ensure our organisation benefits from diverse talents and perspectives, fostering a more equitable workplace and ensuring that barriers to employment for Disabled people are understood and that reasonable adjustments are implemented where possible.</p> <p>This will include conversations with HR to align actions with the workforce strategy and engagement with the Disabled Colleagues Project Board and the Director of Workforce and Change to seek advice on next steps. We will embed positive action measures to support recruitment, retention, and progression of Disabled colleagues.</p>	<p>Q4 25/26</p>	<p>HoS – Permanency and Specialist Services, HoS - City Education, Skills and Learning, H.R. Business Partner</p>



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
<b>Listening to Lived Expertise</b>	<p>The workstream group will ensure that the voices of Disabled staff, children and families are heard and will actively listen to and learn from the experiences of staff and residents from equality communities.</p> <p>We will engage with Disabled adults who have experience of the education system and work with the Bristol Disabled People’s Network (BDPN) to understand how they can be meaningfully involved in policy decisions. This will include creating opportunities for lived experience to inform and shape change.</p>	Q2 26/27	HoS – Permanency and Specialist Services, HoS - City Education, Skills and Learning, Family Support Team Lead (Autism Support)
<b>Adult Social Care</b>			
<b>Employment for Disabled people</b>	<p>A supported employment action plan across commissioning and care management divisions will support a focus on strengths-based practice, encouraging young people to ‘think employment’ and include a focus on the commissioning of services that will support people into the world of work using employment readiness provision in the provider market.</p>	Q4 26/27	Director of Commissioning Adult Social Care



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
<b>Improving Diversity Data</b>	<p>Improving collection of demographic/diversity data of people who draw on care and support to enable us to better understand whether there are inequities around accessing adult care and support services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Refresh and roll out "Improving Equalities Recording" guidance to support recording of demographic data at practice and team level.</li> <li>b. Deliver Quarterly report via the Quality Improvement Performance Board on % of demographic recording on LAS records. Take appropriate management actions to address any specific gaps.</li> <li>c. Targeted actions to address any areas of underrepresentation around access to Adult Social Care.</li> <li>d. Adjustments to ASC case recording system to add a flag on cases where identity characteristics are not recorded.</li> </ul>	Q4 26/27	Director, Adult Social Care
<b>Co-production</b>	Commitment to the implementation of the Adult Social Care Co-production policy. We will monitor	Ongoing to 2028	Executive Director, Adult Social Care



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
	implementation and seek opportunities for co-production.		
<b>Workforce and Change</b>			
<b>Portfolios, Programmes &amp; Projects (PPP)</b>	PPP will review current project design processes and identify further ways to engage/ co-design projects and elements with Disabled people where appropriate. PPP will identify ways to embed checkpoints for engaging with Disabled people into project development processes.	Q4 26/27	HoS - Portfolios, Programmes & Projects (PPP)
<b>Workforce</b>	Improve colleagues' understanding of the social model of disability, awareness of their roles and responsibilities, by increasing take-up of Disability Equity training across the organisation. Progress will be monitored by course completion data and keeping the content under review by using evaluation and evolving good practice.	Q1 26/27	Director of Workforce and Change
<b>Workplace</b>	Ensure the prompt implementation of Reasonable Adjustments – measured through Human Resources	Ongoing to 2028	Director of Workforce and Change



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
	(HR) monitoring data and through a reduction in the number of complaints.		
<b>Workplace</b>	As part of the Premises Collaboration group - develop and implement a range of improvements to our workplaces, to ensure they are accessible and well-equipped for colleagues, addressing barriers that limit inclusion.	Ongoing to 2028	Director of Property, Assets and Infrastructure
<b>Workforce</b>	Work towards achieving Disability Confident Employer Level 3 'Leader' Status, (with the aim of maintaining our current Level 2 status if we are not yet ready for Level 3).	Q3 26/27	Director of Workforce and Change
<b>Workforce</b>	As part of our commitment in the Workforce Strategy 2025-2030, continue to work with the Disabled Colleagues Network staff led group to identify and remove workplace barriers and improve the workplace experience. This will be measured through staff survey data.	Ongoing to 2028	Director of Workforce and Change



Theme	Action	Delivery Timeframe	Reporting Lead
<b>Workforce</b>	We will work with managers to create Workforce and Succession plans, to increase the number of Disabled colleagues joining the organisation and progressing their careers with the council. This will be measured via our HR Diversity dashboard.	Ongoing to 2028	Director of Workforce and Change

## Appendix 1

### Data (2025)

#### Citizens

Bristol’s profile of the Disabled population (2021) shows that more than 81,000 (17.2%) people in Bristol have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses whose day-to-day activities were limited. Disability rates higher than the city average (17%) are found in the ‘Black or Black British Caribbean’ population (23%), the ‘White Irish’ population (21%) and the ‘White British’ population (19%). Almost 2 in 5 (39%) Disabled people aged 16+ whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot have no qualifications (people not disabled 12%). Disabled people are twice as likely to live in social rented accommodation than people not disabled - 32% live in social rented housing compared to 16% of people not disabled.



Bristol's Quality of Life survey (2024/5) shows that Disabled people have the lowest "Net Better" score, at -56.2%, which implies they have the poorest quality of life of any group in the city.

## **Workforce**

Our new Workforce Strategy 2025-2030 sets out our commitments to working together as One Council for an inclusive and high performing workplace. The percentage of Disabled people within our headcount has lowered slightly to 7.6% in November 2025 (a reduction of 0.7% in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24). The percentage of senior leaders who are Disabled people is 6.8% (compared to 3.6% in 2023/24). The 2025 staff survey results for Disabled colleagues show increases in positive responses across most themes, apart from 'Me and my manager' which stayed the same and 'Working Environment and Fairness' which decreased by 4 percentage points (58% in 2024 to 54% in 2025). The most significant increase is for 'Me and My Role' with 11 percentage points (60% in 2024 to 71% in 2025).

The council has an active Staff Led Group – the Disabled Colleagues Network. The Disabled Colleagues Network, together with colleagues from HR, Learning and Development, Corporate Landlord and IT are working together as part of the Disabled Colleagues Project Board to help remove barriers and improve the workplace experience for Disabled colleagues. There are a number of workstreams underway including: Reasonable Adjustments (under which a revised policy, guidance and training have been implemented), Premises and workplace and IT improvements. Positive progress has been made over the last two years, however, there remains more work still to do.