

# Delivering inclusive policy

**Your  
guide**





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# What has disability got to do with me?

As a government policymaker you can influence important decisions that affect people's everyday lives.

Over 10 million people in the UK are disabled. The definition of disability is broader than you might think. It includes invisible impairments such as people with cancer, learning disabilities or epilepsy.

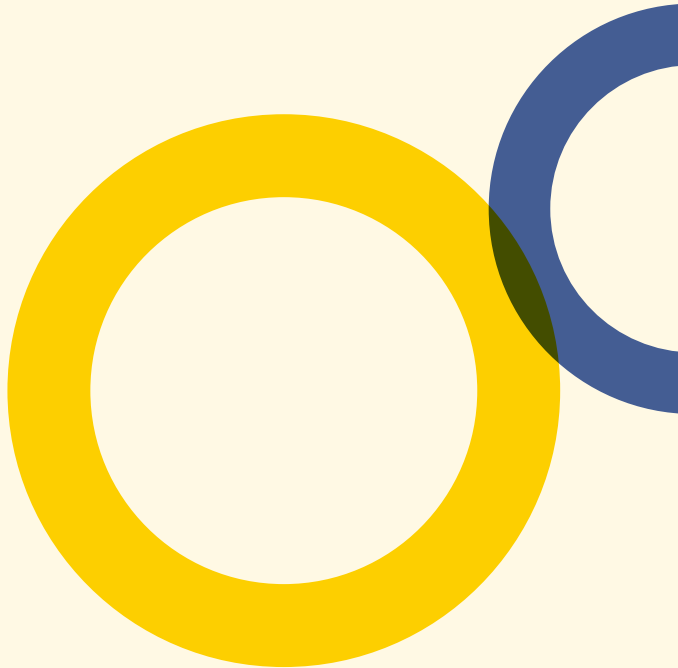
**Why is this important?** Because it means that your customers include disabled people.

It also means that a proportion of your customers:

- face barriers trying to access services
- may interact with government services differently, sometimes more frequently and sometimes with complicated overlapping rules.

Understanding the perspective, needs and priorities of disabled people will help you develop better policy and deliver successful public services.

We appreciate it can seem daunting to consider the needs of disabled people in all policies and services. So the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) works in collaboration with government departments to help develop skills, expertise and confidence – and show it's not difficult.



# Did you know...?

## In the UK:

- around **1 in 20** children are disabled
- around **1 in 7** people of working age are disabled
- almost **1 in 2** people over state pension age are disabled

To learn more about disability in your policy area, you can read about the government's vision for disability equality and key facts on the ODI website.

[www.odi.gov.uk/policy](http://www.odi.gov.uk/policy)



# Rethink your view on disability

ODI encourages government departments to use the social model of disability, which says that disability is created by barriers in society.

These barriers generally fall into three categories:

- the environment – including inaccessible buildings and services
- people's attitudes – stereotyping, discrimination and prejudice
- organisations – inflexible policies, practices and procedures.

Many people think that disability is caused by an individual's health condition or impairment. This approach is called the medical model of disability.

The medical model says that by fixing their body, disabled people will be able to participate in society like everyone else. This is an outdated model that is not supported by disabled people. Basing your policy on this view of disability will be ineffective.

If you develop policy based on the social model you will be able to identify the barriers to disabled people's inclusion and ways of removing them. Your policy can remove barriers by changing the environment, people's attitudes or the way organisations or society operates, instead of focusing on changing the disabled person's impairment.

The social model is a useful tool to help you find practical solutions for improving disabled people's outcomes. Policymakers often find that if they make changes that bring about improvements for disabled people, these changes are welcomed by a much broader group of people.

# Your legal duty

As well as the compelling business reasons for considering disability in your work, there are also legal considerations.

The Disability Equality Duty says that public bodies must proactively ensure that disabled people are treated fairly by looking at the way policies and services are designed and delivered. The Duty requires public bodies to involve disabled people in developing a Disability Equality Scheme which must be published annually.

The Duty is designed to ensure that public bodies think about disabled people's requirements at the start of all their activities. ODI can help government departments to meet these legal requirements at any stage of policy development. We will support you to work in partnership with disabled people, which will improve outcomes and give you new skills.

# Legal reporting requirements

Public bodies are required to report on progress against their Disability Equality Schemes every year. Selected Secretaries of State are also required to report on their department's progress towards disability equality every three years. The next reports are due in 2011.

## Updating the Duty

The new Equality Act has brought existing equality legislation together to simplify the law and make it easier to understand. The Single Equality Duty, which will replace the Disability Equality Duty, is likely to be implemented from April 2011.

Find out more about the law

**[www.odi.gov.uk/law](http://www.odi.gov.uk/law)**

# Focus on outcomes

The UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People was ratified by the UK government in 2009. The Convention was based on the views of disabled people and describes what equality means in each policy area and how equality should be realised.

As a result, the Convention identifies disabled people's desired outcomes across a wide range of policy areas. Policies that affect disabled people should be guided by the outcomes described in the Convention.

Find out more about the UN Convention on ODI's website

**[www.odi.gov.uk/un-convention](http://www.odi.gov.uk/un-convention)**

# Inclusive policy making

Disabled people are the experts in their own lives and their views are an essential part of your evidence base.

Information gathered directly from disabled people should be used alongside traditional research and evidence gathering methods. An understanding of your customers' experience is required to deliver good policy. Without this understanding, you cannot be confident that your policy will meet everyone's needs.

Involving disabled people will help you understand the reality of their lives and how your policy might affect them. It will also help you identify gaps in your knowledge and give you an indication of whether your policy will work in the short and long term.

The following pages will help you understand how to involve and engage disabled people in your policymaking, which will help you meet your strategic objectives.

We work in partnership with government departments, so if you'd like tailored support or advice, get in touch. You can find our contact details on page 32.





# Co-production

Co-production means working with disabled people as partners at a strategic level. This goes beyond involvement.

There are many benefits to co-production.

- The policy or service you are developing will benefit from first-hand experience of disabled people.
- Agreeing to work in partnership demonstrates that you value your customers' views and helps to build understanding of your organisation's role.
- You can work together to identify solutions to difficult problems.

Co-production could be working closely with a particular organisation or inviting a range of disabled people to advise your project. This ensures that the same group of disabled people will be involved throughout development and delivery of your policy. You will benefit from their familiarity with the subject matter and they will learn a lot about your organisation and the way it works.

Read more about co-production, including information on rewarding participants, in ODI's guide.

Involving disabled people  
**[www.odi.gov.uk/involve](http://www.odi.gov.uk/involve)**



# Case study: Right to Control

**The Right to Control is one of ODI's most innovative projects. The policy puts disabled people firmly in control of their own lives. From December 2010 disabled people in pilot sites will be able to choose how to use state funding, to get the support they need.**

**The project established an Advisory Group of disabled experts to ensure co-production at every level of the project's decision-making. The group has:**

- **contributed to the policy's development**
- **reviewed legislation and guidance**
- **provided examples of good practice from across the country.**

**ODI involved disabled people by testing the consultation questions with a user-led organisation. As a result of their advice ODI created an accessible toolkit. ODI also supported national and local disability organisations to hold consultation events.**

**As a result, the policy is soundly based on disabled people's needs and has drawn strong support from a range of stakeholders.**

**The Right to Control is now being tested by selected local authorities. The authorities are working with local disabled people to design a user-friendly system for delivering the Right.**



# Consultations

In certain circumstances government departments have legal duties to hold public consultations. It is vital that everyone is able to respond.

Consultations must be accessible to disabled people. Information should be written in accessible language, which will benefit everyone responding to your consultation. You will also need to consider alternative formats and accessible events.

Involving disabled people in the planning and development of the consultation will help you prepare the documents. You could also:

- test the language you use to describe your policy and the way you ask questions by having an informal event with disabled people
- publish explanatory documents with your consultation, such as a toolkit or a summary.

You can read more about accessibility later in this booklet or contact ODI if you have a specific query (details on page 25).



# Case study: Crown Prosecution Service

**The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) held a consultation on a public policy statement to explain how it deals with cases involving victims or witnesses with a mental health issue or a learning disability. The policy statement was designed to ensure that they have the same access to justice as other victims or witnesses.**

**The CPS worked with two organisations representing people with learning disabilities and people with mental health conditions. They produced the consultation material in alternative formats and ran two focus groups.**

**Involving disabled people significantly improved the final policy. Major changes included:**

- producing two different policies for the two groups to reflect the different issues that affected them**
- clarification that courts cannot assume a witness or victim is not reliable simply because they have learning disabilities or a mental health condition.**

**Policymakers benefited from the involvement, particularly in writing public documents in accessible language. Feedback on the public policy statements suggested that all public documents should be written this way, not just those which affect disabled people.**

# Equality Impact Assessments

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool that helps you establish the impact of your policy on different groups of people. An EIA is required for new and existing policies and it is good practice to publish your assessments.

The purpose of the assessment is to make sure that a policy, and the way it is delivered, will be successful. It will identify whether the policy works for everyone.

The assessment will help you identify the policy's likely effect on disabled people and other groups. If the impact is negative or potentially discriminatory, you will be able to change the policy before it is implemented or find ways of mitigating the effects.

We can advise when you are considering your assessment and help you look at solutions to support disabled people.

You can find more information about Equality Impact Assessments on the ODI website

**[www.odi.gov.uk/eia](http://www.odi.gov.uk/eia)**



# Involving disabled people in EIAs

Gathering information for an assessment usually begins with collecting existing quantitative and qualitative data. Existing research is likely to give you a broad understanding of how your policy might work in practice and how it will impact on people.

ODI also recommends involving disabled people in your assessment. You will gain valuable information from speaking to the people that will be affected by your policy. It will help you validate the data you have already gathered and deliver your policy more effectively. It will also help you look at where your policy might create new barriers.

More information is available on the ODI website.

Involving disabled people  
**[www.odi.gov.uk/involve](http://www.odi.gov.uk/involve)**

# How to make involvement accessible

When you are involving disabled people or communicating with the public you will need to consider accessibility. Brief information about making events and documents accessible is included in this section.

You can learn more about accessibility on the ODI's communications hub

**[www.odi.gov.uk/communications](http://www.odi.gov.uk/communications)**



## Your legal duty

The Disability Discrimination Act requires service providers to make reasonable changes to the way services are delivered. This includes the way government provides information. You will need to think about how you are going to provide information for everyone. Your communications team may be able to help you do this.

The Equality Act will replace the Disability Discrimination Act from October 2010, but the requirements will remain the same.

Find out more about the law

**[www.odi.gov.uk/law](http://www.odi.gov.uk/law)**

# Events

To ensure you can include everyone in your event, think about accessibility at the beginning. It's also important to bear in mind that it may not just be delegates you need to think about – you may have disabled speakers or exhibitors too.

ODI's accessible events guide includes information about making the physical environment more inclusive, as well as tips for developing the programme and chairing the event.

Delivering accessible events  
**[www.odi.gov.uk/events](http://www.odi.gov.uk/events)**



# Alternative formats

Disabled people may request to receive information in a specific way. Meeting this request will fulfil your obligations as a service provider under the Disability Discrimination Act. In most cases it should be considered reasonable to provide alternative formats.

There is a common misconception that alternative formats are expensive to produce, but Braille and audio are generally inexpensive.

Some alternative formats can meet the needs of your wider audience. For instance, Easy Read is a format that features simple sentences and illustrations, developed primarily for people with learning disabilities. This format is popular with most readers as it provides a succinct summary of complex information.



By thinking about how you provide information for disabled people, you will often identify the best way of communicating with everyone.

Information about alternative formats is available on ODI's website

**[www.odi.gov.uk/formats](http://www.odi.gov.uk/formats)**

# Publishing online

The government publishes a significant amount of documents online, including policies and consultations. PDFs can be made accessible for most disabled people, but only if they are produced correctly. If you are using an external organisation to design your document, you can give them ODI's brief guide.

Delivering technically accessible publications

**[www.odi.gov.uk/publishing](http://www.odi.gov.uk/publishing)**

You can deliver the same level of accessibility in your PDFs when producing them yourself. You will need to prepare your Word document correctly before creating a PDF. ODI has published a short guide explaining how to do this.

Preparing accessible Microsoft Word documents

**[www.odi.gov.uk/publishing](http://www.odi.gov.uk/publishing)**

Bear in mind that if a disabled person requests a Word version of your publication, in most cases it should be considered reasonable to provide one.

# Advice and support

You have responsibility for involving disabled people and addressing their needs within your policy area, but ODI can help. We provide strategic advice, tools and support so we can deliver disability equality together.

Depending on the nature of your request, we can provide:

- information – guidance documents and signposting to specialist organisations, such as disabled people’s organisations
- advice – tailored advice by email or face to face
- support – acting as an in-house consultancy service tailored to your needs, we will give departments the tools and skills they need to be confident and inclusive. These projects will meet joint outcomes and contribute towards disability equality.

ODI can also facilitate contact with Equality 2025, a non-departmental public body of disabled people that can offer independent advice to Ministers or officials.

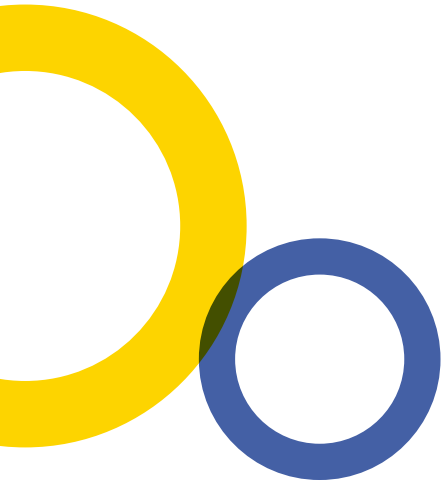
Read more about Equality 2025 on the ODI website

**[www.odi.gov.uk/equality2025](http://www.odi.gov.uk/equality2025)**

Email your contact details and a brief description of your query to

**[office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)**

You can also use this email address to sign up for ODInsight, our monthly email newsletter for civil servants.





The Office for Disability Issues leads the government's vision of achieving equality for disabled people. One of the ways we do this is by working with civil servants to make sure the needs of disabled people are reflected in their work. We provide strategic advice, share tools and help you develop new skills.

This short guide explains how policymakers can have a direct impact on delivering disability equality. It will point you to valuable resources that can help you deliver effective policies.

This publication is also available in audio and Braille. If you would like a copy in either format, please contact us.

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