

Disability Unit putting lived experience at the heart of its work

The Cabinet Office's Disability Unit is working to achieve practical changes for disabled people, which remove barriers and increase opportunity.

A focus of this work is understanding the lived experience of disabled people, together with relevant evidence and data. To do this we are working across government, with disabled people, their organisations, charities and other stakeholders to gain their valuable insight.

We want to reach as many people as possible, including those who may not usually engage with the government, providing a variety of ways to engage with us according to people's preference or accessibility requirements.

The current situation with the coronavirus pandemic makes face to face engagement impossible at present. We are working on plans to develop a digital engagement programme so we can undertake some engagement in the meantime. We recognise that many disabled people are not able to access digital means of communication, so this is a temporary approach. We will be undertaking extensive regional and local engagement once we can meet face to face again.

Some examples of the engagement we are undertaking include:

- a [Regional Stakeholder Network](#) of disabled people and organisations across England – to share their views throughout the year on a wide range of issues that matter most to disabled people
- a new forum between some of the leading disabled people's organisations, some of the Regional Stakeholder Network chairs and other smaller disabled people's organisations – to provide an opportunity to meet with the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, and to bring the voices and expertise of disabled people into the heart of government policy making
- a series of roadshows around the country to allow disabled people to talk directly to policy makers and to share their insights and lived experiences
- meetings between the 10 disability charities that make up the Disability Charities Consortium and the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, and the Disability Unit – to bring the voices and expertise of disabled people into the heart of government policy making
- digital engagement to increase our reach and connect with more individuals and smaller organisations in particular – online surveys and video meetings will be helpful in complementing more traditional face to face engagement and may be more accessible for some people, and will be vital in the coming weeks with current restrictions because of coronavirus

Technology provides opportunities, but can be a barrier for some, therefore

we are working to identify the most inclusive and accessible ways to work with stakeholders during this period and in the future.