

Community Conversations: Disability Access

Attendee Information Booklet

*Online Sessions
Thursday 23rd May*



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Introduction

About the Project

In the UK, disabilities can significantly affect daily life, including mobility, access to services, employment, and social inclusion. The government has enacted policies like the Equality Act 2010 to combat discrimination and mandate reasonable adjustments for disabled individuals. However, implementation varies, and many still face barriers.

Support and community groups are vital in addressing these challenges, providing a platform for disabled individuals to share experiences, advocate for rights, and access resources. They also support caregivers, who often bear a significant care burden. Transport and local service access are key concerns. Despite accessibility regulations, many disabled people, including those in Lancaster, face barriers in accessing public transport, public and private spaces, and local services. Community attitudes towards disability greatly influence disabled individuals' experiences, with harassment and discrimination being unfortunately common.

These discussions aim to illuminate the lived experiences of our disabled communities in Lancaster, the challenges they face, and collate innovative ideas and examples of good practice. The goal is to foster a greater understanding of disability access issues in the Lancaster district and inspire action towards a more inclusive and accessible society. Thank you for your interest in this crucial topic.

A Guide to Our Language

The Social Model of Disability

Throughout this booklet we will be referring to a range of factors which can impact a person's experiences with the world around them. As a disabled person, many barriers in our local area can be addressed, fixed or reduced by different groups of people. Sometimes the council is able to invest in training or infrastructure changes. Other times, local businesses can adapt their layouts to make a shop floor more user-friendly.

These societal barriers, and the changes we can make to them align with the Social Model of Disability:

'That people with impairments are 'dis-abled' by the barriers operating in society that exclude and discriminate against them?'

Code of Conduct

We want to ensure that this discussion is a safe and welcoming one for all involved. As such, we appreciate your understanding and cooperation with the use of sensitive language surrounding disability and other protected characteristics.

If, for any reason, we feel that a discussion is no longer productive or comfortable for those involved, our facilitators will redirect the discussion topic and may ask involved parties to leave if conversations cannot remain respectful and civil.

Project Partners

Lancaster City Council

In its Council Plan for 2024–2027, Lancaster City Council outlines its priorities and ambitions and a strategic vision for its services. It demonstrates the council's commitment to making the most of the district's many attributes as a great place to live, work and visit.

In addition to its ambitions, the plan also includes case studies of the council's many successes, which have been achieved against the background of continued financial challenges.

Lancaster University



For nearly six decades, we have been an integral part of this city, collaborating with and supporting the local communities that shape us. Our Bailrigg campus is home to over 3,000 dedicated staff, united in our mission to educate and empower over 14,000 students annually.

Drawing on the University's values, we strive to create a culture whereby we build strong communities, and all groups of people are able to be themselves. We want to actively promote a culture of belonging and celebrate and value diversity both within the university and wider across the city and the district.

Lancaster District CVS

Lancaster District Community & Voluntary Solutions (CVS) is the umbrella organisation for community organisations (including charities, social enterprises and faith groups) in our area. We provide them with practical and strategic support to help them achieve their goals.



With over 300 members and positions in a number of key partnerships and networks we are able to influence change and facilitate conversations. We are taking part in this project because we want to understand the barriers that people face in their own words. This will help us to support our members and our communities to do their part in taking action to resolve them.

UHMBT

The University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Trust (UHMBT) Integrated Care Community's (ICCs) are partnerships made up of representatives from local organisations, services and groups who work collaboratively to improve health and wellbeing outcomes whilst reducing inequalities in their district.

Neuro DropIn



I am Sharon Jackson Founder of Neuro DropIn. My own diagnosis of a Multiple Sclerosis (MS) made me uncomfortably aware of the gaps in services and support for people just like me adjusting to a life limiting health condition and I wanted to change that.

At Neuro DropIn we offer a range of services and support designed to benefit the wellbeing of everyone affected by a neuro diagnosis for as long as they need us. We are proud of our organisation and the reach it has in the wider community.

Focus Areas

During a small focus group, held prior to Christmas 2023, four thematic areas were identified for discussion at our Community Conversation around Disability Access: Transport, Buildings, Attitudes and Environment.

We will be using these themes to direct conversations in four separate tables during each session but provide more context to the themes below.



Transport

From road works and taxis, to bus timetables, pedestrian crossings, and public footpaths; transport in the Lancaster area is the first thing we consider when we leave our houses.

Think you have a suggestion to improve overcrowding or would like to discuss how to improve recommended walking routes? Bring them along to our conversations.

Buildings

Thinking about both the public and private buildings across our city and district, much of the access is limited due to range of reasons.

How able are you to visit community groups? Do you need to plan ahead for doctors visits? Are your choices of shops and services limited? Do you feel isolated in your home?



Attitudes

The social attitudes of the people in our district rely heavily on the ways in which we have learnt to behave from those around us.

Are our professional services providing good role models to our communities with positive attitudes and examples of working with and advocating for disabled people? How can we improve and develop these societal attitudes?

Environment

Outside of your homes, what are your experiences like accessing the beautiful landscapes, points of interest in our area, and wonderful opportunities we have on offer in the area?

Are there enough opportunities for you to be involved with developing green spaces or be consulted on upcoming festivals and opportunities?



Event Format

Each event will begin with a 10 minute introduction from our Moderator, Hannah Rosbrook-Brown. She will talk attendees through the purpose of the event, some key information about using Teams, and introduce the four facilitators for that session.

Attendees will then split off into four digital breakout rooms, each supported by a facilitator. Over the next 20 minutes, you will be able to have a conversation about that room's Focus Area.

After the 20 minutes, our facilitators will rotate between the rooms. You do not need to move with them or click any other buttons. With your new facilitator, you will talk about their Focus Area.

Then we'll have a 10-minute break, for you to have a stretch and move away from your screen for a bit. Take some time to use the loo, grab a fresh drink, check your texts, or say hello to your pets.

After the break, you'll rejoin the same breakout room as before. We will repeat the same process as before the break, with two more facilitators.

At the end of the session, we will bring everybody back into one room together and say a little bit of a thank you, explain how we plan to bring all of your comments and ideas together, and bring the event to a close.

Using Microsoft Teams

You do not need a Microsoft or Teams account to access these sessions. If you don't have an account, you will join us as a Guest.

For the best experience, we recommend using a desktop PC or laptop. Microsoft Teams does work on Android and iOS devices, but will require you to download the App.

To join the session on the day, click the [Join the Meeting Now](#) button. If you have the Microsoft Teams App installed, you can select that option. If you do not have Microsoft Teams installed, select the Continue on this Browser button.

Opening the meeting in browser, it will ask permission to access your Camera and Microphone. Once you select Allow, you can turn off your camera and microphone once you join the meeting if you would like.

If you use Teams for work, and do not wish for other members of the session to see your work contact details, please make sure to either log out of Microsoft Teams, or to open the meeting in an incognito or private browser.

If you prefer, you can also join these meetings by phone, but audio and engagement features may be limited.



Agenda

Session Section	Approximate Timings
Introduction & Important Information	6.30m - 6.40pm
Conversation 1	6.40pm - 7.00pm
Facilitator Movement & Conversation 2	7.00pm - 7.25pm
Comfort Break	7.25pm - 7.35pm
Conversation 3	7.35pm - 7.55pm
Facilitator Movement & Conversation 4	7.55pm - 8.20pm
Thankyou and Goodbye	8.20pm - 8.30pm



Our Conversations

Each of our four conversations will be focused around a different Focus Area, and our facilitators will ask you two types of questions:

“What are your experiences with this already?”

The first question is an opportunity for you to tell us your experiences, and thoughts on what it is currently like living in the local area and engaging with Lancaster’s travel, buildings, people and environment.

You might have personal experiences from last week, or from years ago. If you have experiences with specific businesses or groups, that is fine, but please remember that we might not be able to change those factors.

We’d like to keep these conversations quite factual, so please try to keep away from any extreme ‘What If?’ scenarios. Without evidence or experience, we really can’t say what could have happened in imaginary situations.

“What would you like to see in the future?”

This next question is an open-ended conversation for you to suggest changes you would like to see in the future to the local area. Some fixes might be quite quickly implemented and affordably done, while others can take years to process.

All ideas and suggestions are welcome, and we will discuss them all with you. Please be aspirational in these conversations. Think big and impactful for the whole community! Fixing a paving slab on one street is a good ask, but asking the council to quality check every public pathway every 3 years is high aspirations, and benefits far wider groups of people than just one street.

How are we using these conversations?

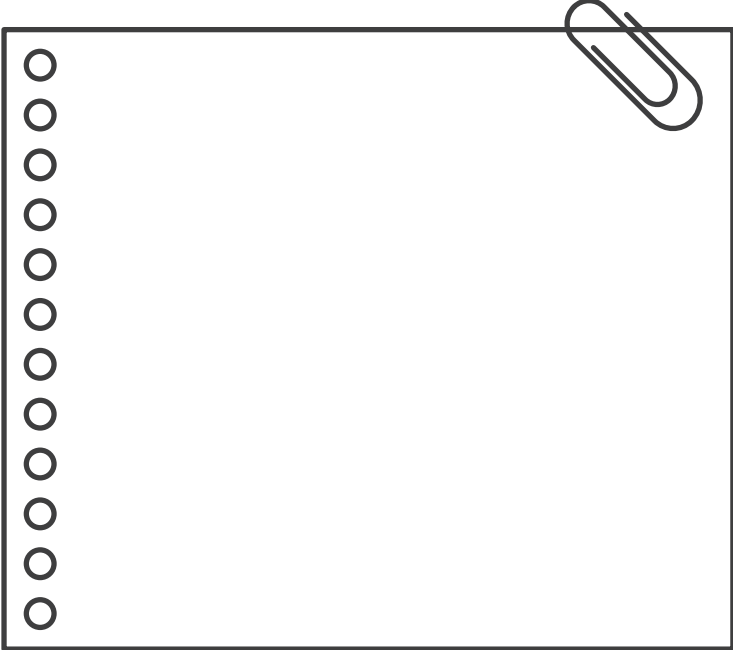
We would like to take your experiential evidence, with all of these suggestions, to the council to build a case for improved commitment to disability access across many areas of daily life for the district’s residents. Councils rely on evidential data and actionable outcomes to direct their momentum in future years. We intend to have a real impact on Lancaster City Council’s commitments to disability support, services and inclusion in the coming years.

Any experiences you mention will be anonymised if we use them in future reports or proposals. If we do want to use your experience as a larger piece of evidence, we’ll aim to contact you further down the line and have another conversation to bring more of the story together.

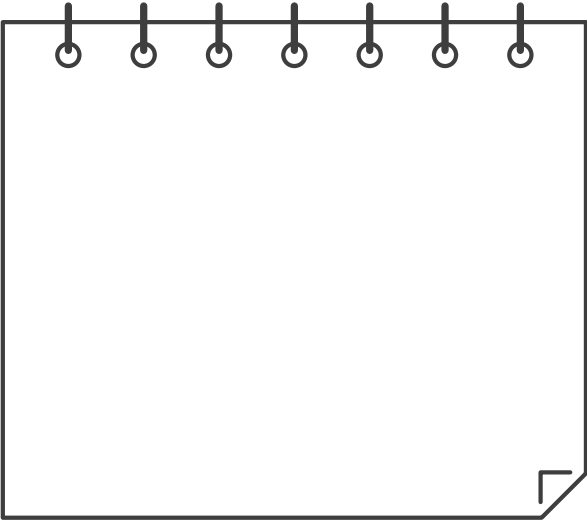
In order to do this, we’ll email everyone after the event and invite you to sign up to a mailing list for updates on this and related projects.

Notes Page

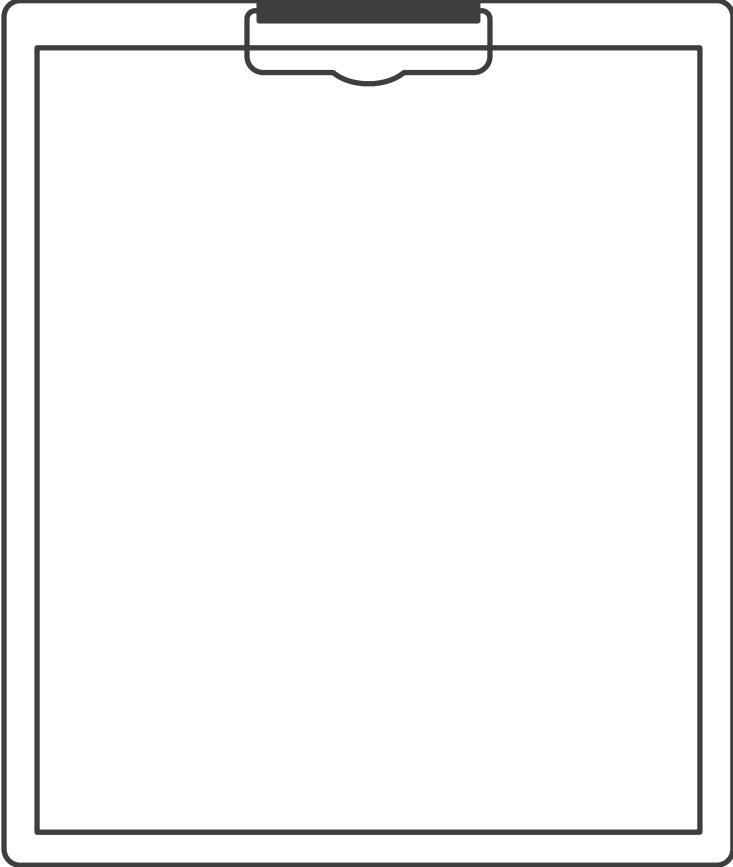
If you'd like to prepare or write down some of your thoughts or experiences ahead of the event, use the memo boxes below to write some notes.



A rectangular memo box with a paperclip icon in the top right corner. On the left side, there is a vertical column of ten small circles, resembling a binder edge.



A rectangular memo box with a spiral binding at the top, represented by seven small circles. The bottom right corner is folded over.



A large rectangular memo box with a smaller inner rectangle. A clip icon is positioned at the top center of the inner rectangle.



A rectangular memo box with a dark horizontal bar at the top center. The bottom right corner is folded over.



A horizontal rectangular memo box with a hatched pattern on the right side.



A horizontal rectangular memo box with a folded bottom right corner.