



Disability  
Equality  
Scotland

# Annual Report

Trustees' Annual Report  
and Financial Accounts

For the Year Ended  
31 March 2022

 [www.disabilityequality.scot](http://www.disabilityequality.scot)

 DisabilityEqualityScotland

 @DEScotTweets



Registered Scotland Charity Number: SCO 31893  
Company Number: SC 243392



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## Introduction from the Convener and Chief Executive

### Striving towards inclusion with Disability Equality Scotland



During this last year we have continued to listen to our members and strengthened the alignment of our work to our aims, vision and mission.

While we might live in an uncertain world, there are

some things that Disability Equality Scotland can rely on, notably our members and Access Panels who continue to champion access, inclusion and equality for all.

In our final year of our current Strategic Plan, we have taken significant steps to raise awareness and help grow Disability Equality Scotland and identified our member's priority areas to focus on going forward.

### Taking forward the views from Weekly Polls

Our weekly polls enable us to engage with a wide number of disabled people, gathering their views and using this to feed into various Scottish Government consultations, developing legislation and policies. This ensures that disabled people feel included and that their views are heard and valued. This mechanism ensures that policy makers know more about the issues that affect disabled people.

During this period, we have ensured key issues from weekly polls are taken forward in Scottish Parliament via parliamentary questions, Cross Party Groups and giving evidence to parliamentary committees. Read more on pages 22 and 23.



## Engaging Events

COVID-19 has meant that we have had to adapt the way we consult and engage with our membership. We moved our face-to-face events online and have used Zoom and Microsoft Teams to stay connected to our membership and wider stakeholders.

This has been very successful for us as we have been able to increase the number of attendees at our events and ensure that no-one misses out, as events are recorded and shared on our social media platforms:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMoBgB3fQSptt9q0skTzLeA/featured>

A weekly poll carried out in May 2021 asked our members whether they had found online events easier to join compared to face-to-face events, in a bid to determine how we progress in future. Results showed that 93% (345 respondents) found online easier. Online engagement helped disabled people stay connected with others during the pandemic and had increased levels of engagement with us as an organisation.

We are keen to ensure those who have engaged digitally are not excluded going forward.

Our member's survey this year indicated that 59% of our members would like us to start using a combination of both online and face to face approaches to our events and meetings and we are exploring how we introduce this way of working in response.

This is why, our staff team will be working hard in this next year to develop accessible hybrid events where we can continue with our engagement and give members a choice to join online **or** in person for some events. All events will be available to join on-line.

## Progressive and Engaged Board of Directors

We were delighted that at last year's AGM, members elected our two young Directors to the board. We would also like to thank the



Board of Directors who have remained fully engaged this year and have brought scrutiny, challenge, passion and vision to our board meetings and subgroup meetings.

The voices and input of our young Directors has also brought a fresh focus, new innovative ideas and ways of working as well as challenge to our work.

This report updates on some of our key achievements over the year and we would like to thank everyone that has been involved in delivering this progress.

**Linda Bamford**

Convener  
Officer

**Morven Brooks**

Chief Executive



## Trustees' report for the year ended 31 March 2022

The trustees present their report, incorporating their strategic report and financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022. The financial accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in the notes to the financial statements and comply with the charitable company's Articles of Association and the Companies Act 2006.

### Objectives and activities

We are a national charity working to make life more accessible, equal, and inclusive for disabled people in Scotland.

Our aim is for every disabled person to have the opportunity to participate in a fulfilling life and to enable them to reach their full potential.

This annual report covers progress on Disability Equality Scotland's objectives and activities between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Our objectives as set out in our governing document are:

- to promote the benefit of disabled people in Scotland by encouraging communication between disabled people and national and local organisations concerned with the inclusion of disabled people in society.
- to advance the education of the public about disability equality and accessible environments, and to effect positive change in attitude and awareness of disability.

#### Our Vision

Working towards Equality,  
Inclusion and Participation for  
Disabled People in Scotland

#### Our Mission

Our mission is to give all  
disabled people in Scotland a  
voice with trust, care and  
empathy.



## Main Objectives for the Year

Disability Equality Scotland has been involved in many projects, all of which focus on the organisation's principles to:

1. Improve disabled people's access to participation and engagement in society through increased support, services, and awareness around disability equality.
2. Improve understanding and reporting of disability hate crime across Scotland.
3. Promote connectivity between Access Panels and improve access to support for volunteer members in delivering on equality and inclusion-based work.
4. Increase awareness and knowledge of Access, Inclusion and Equality within the Access Panel Network.
5. Planning and design professionals will have access to a range of resources, best practice, advice, and solutions aimed at accessibility/inclusive design.
6. Disabled people will have on-going involvement and further opportunities to provide their views on Accessible Transport in Scotland, contributing to the progress of the Accessible Travel Framework development and implementation.
7. Disabled people, transport operators, staff and other stakeholders will have access to accessible travel guidance, information, and signposting via an Accessible Travel Hub.
8. There will be a joined-up approach to tackling disability hate crime and negative behaviours towards disabled people on public transport across Scotland.



The following pages are the main areas of work delivered through Scottish Government funding and Garfield Weston:

- Scottish Government Equality Unit: Promoting Equality and Cohesion Fund
- Inspiring Scotland: Equality and Human Rights Fund
- Section 10 Grant Scheme: Access Panel Project
- Transport Scotland (Bus, Accessibility and Active Travel Directorate): Accessible Travel Framework
- Transport Scotland Ferries Accessibility Unit: Ferries Accessibility Fund
- COVID-19 Public Health Directorate: Face Covering Exemption Card

## Membership

We work with our members to promote equality for disabled people in Scotland.

We regularly ask our members for their views on many diverse policy issues, which then directly feed into our policy work and government policies, plans and consultation responses. This last year has been no exception, with member's feedback influencing key COVID-19 related guidance, especially as the restrictions eased.

We make sure members have opportunities to meet and network with relevant audiences. We help members make the right connections.

During the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 we had 280 new members join us, resulting in a 9% increase in our overall membership, this brought our membership total to 1417 members.



Total Membership: 1417 (1247 Individual, 118 Corporate, 14 Young Members, 38 Access Panels):

- Individual members: increased by 11%, from 1126 to 1247
- Corporate members: decreased by 7%, from 127 to 118.
- Access Panels: 3 new members joined us, increasing our Access Panel members to 38
- Young Members: We created a new Young Membership category, and now have 14 young members.



### **Data cleaning:**

We undertake a yearly data clean on our database. Checks on the database identified 142 membership records as incomplete, and letters were sent asking them to update their details to be re-added to the database. These incomplete records were identified through repeat 'hard bounces' (error messages e.g., 'recipient email not found' or 'recipient inbox full'), or where corporate member contacts had changed roles. Of the 142 incomplete records, 23 were corporate members and 119 were individual.

### **What difference has our Membership made?**

Members are at the heart of all our work and projects. Our members have a direct say in what we do and how we do it, inputting ideas and evidence to inform and direct our work and sharing their lived experiences to allow us to identify what changes are required in our pursuit for full access and inclusion for disabled people.



We conduct a yearly survey with our members to understand where we can make improvements and understand what we are getting right. The last survey was conducted in August 2021 and received 100 responses.

- 77% of respondents felt they could contribute their views on topics that affect them
- 61% of respondents felt they could participate in discussions about topics that affect them
- 85% of respondents felt they are presented with information in an accessible format which meets their needs

We'll look to improve on these figures by exploring hybrid events for engagement and remind our members that we have alternative formats available.

- 83% of respondents were satisfied with our weekly poll topics and 95% were aware of our weekly polls

We will continue to communicate what we do with the poll information and to which policy areas the data contributes.

- 72% of respondents felt they benefit from being a member with Disability Equality Scotland
- 77% of our members agree we represent the views of disabled people in Scotland

We will ask members in the next survey to indicate areas of importance for further exploration. We'll also continue to look for innovative ways to increase the benefits of membership with Disability Equality Scotland.

We will also promote the survey in different formats to increase the number of respondents from our membership.



## Disability Equality Scotland Newsletter and Open Door Magazine

Over the past year, the monthly newsletter has been an important channel for distributing key public health information to our members about the easing of COVID-19-19 restrictions. Our members have found the newsletter to be a useful resource, highlighting the relevant support that is in place to support disabled people.

Our Open Door Magazine is our members' magazine. In the last year, we published a bumper edition theme on Inclusive Communication.

In this issue the theme was inclusive communication, an approach that recognises that all human beings use many ways of understanding and expressing themselves. We showcased articles from organisations in Scotland who are championing inclusive communication. We also raise awareness of the Inclusive Communication Hub ([www.inclusivecommunication.scot](http://www.inclusivecommunication.scot)), a website that we host in partnership with Sense Scotland, which signposts to useful information and resources.

### **What difference have our communications made?**

We share our communications with members, Scottish Ministers, key partners and stakeholders, highlighting and promoting our work widely. Feedback is always very positive.

**“Many thanks for sharing the final draft, we are delighted to contribute to an edition themed on inclusive comms!” - Richard Baker from Sight Scotland**

**“Thank you for helping me to stay connected with other young people through polls and magazines.”**



## Face Covering Exemption Card Campaign



There are situations where some people are unable to, or it would be inappropriate for them, to wear a face covering. The reasons why someone might be exempt are explained on the face covering exemptions page

<https://exempt.scot/face-covering-exemptions/>

Since the introduction of the mandatory wearing of face coverings, and in light of Disability Equality Scotland's members' concerns raised through our weekly poll on the subject, we were very happy to work with the Scottish Government to introduce a national exemption card. The card is available through our dedicated website [www.exempt.scot](http://www.exempt.scot). The project was launched to the public in late October 2020.

During the first two weeks of the campaign, we received over 1,150 calls to the helpline and nearly 28,000 applications in total.

For the reporting year 01 April 2021 - 31 March 2022, we supplied over 47,450 physical exemption cards and over 24,000 digital versions. We have also answered over 1,700 calls to the helpline in this reporting period. In September 2021 we introduced a digital download version in line with demand. Between April 2021 and March 2022, 45,621 cards were downloaded.

### **What difference have the Face Covering Exemption Cards made?**



We issued a feedback survey to card holders. This survey has allowed us to evaluate the impact the card has had since its introduction.

As of March 2022, we had received almost 6,000 responses to the survey, a great response rate of 23% from all the invitations issued. This allowed us to better understand the impact the card has had, and the challenges people continue to face in the community.

Christina McKelvie, Minister for Equalities and Older People

**“Let me take this opportunity to thank Disability Equality Scotland and its members for their swift action in realising the urgent need to implement an exemption card through the evidence gathered in your weekly polls.”**



## Disability Webinars

Our webinars help to bring disabled people together with experts on different topics as well as providing an opportunity to meet with other disabled people. During the period April 2021 to March 2022, we delivered eight Disability Webinars across the following topics:



1. Journey Planning, 24 May 2021 Discussing the information disabled people need to plan an accessible journey, and to hear their experiences of using Traveline Scotland.



2. Access to Public Appointments, 3 June 2021 about encouraging disabled people to take up public appointments and the impact they can have.



3. Independent Living Fund, 8 July 2021 to raise awareness of the fund and encourage disabled people to use it.



4. Return to Public Transport, 19 August 2021, to discuss how confident disabled people feel about using public transport, post-pandemic.



5. Disability Hate Crime, 12 October 2021, with Police Scotland to raise awareness of what hate crime is and how to support those affected by it.



6. COVID-19 Recovery Bill Workshop, 26 October 2021 to hear what people with lived experience of disability think about COVID-19 recovery and changes to the law.



7. Assistance Cards, 01 November 2021, to raise awareness of tools and support measures in place to help disabled people travel.



8. Transport staff training, 24 February 2022, to explore the types of training that transport staff receive and how this translates to disabled peoples' experiences day-to-day.



Each event welcomed an average of 37 delegates (local disabled people, local authority staff, statutory bodies, MSPs, local private companies and third sector organisations).

## **What difference have our Disability Webinars made?**

Our webinars help to bring disabled people together with experts on different topics and gives an opportunity to mix with other disabled people.

The webinars encourage disabled people to engage with us as an organisation and help to create new memberships. Some feedback from our webinars include:

**“It was current and relevant to my needs as we move beyond level 0. The discussions and presentations were very useful and gave me a little more confidence.”**

**“Great to be involved in [DES] webinar – a great discussion about what disabled passengers can expect from their service and what measures are in place to keep passengers safe as restrictions ease.”**

**“Thank you to [DES] for facilitating an informative discussion about return to travel, Also to ScotRail, FirstBus and NorthLink Ferries for providing updates regarding ongoing support to passengers.”**

**“Excellent webinar today from [DES] discussing the return to public transport. Fantastic discussion and great presentations from FirstBus, ScotRail and NorthLink Ferries.”**

**“Great webinar today with some interesting and helpful discussions with the presenters. A lot of good points raised and addressed.”**

“Great to be involved in the discussion on disability awareness training for public transport staff.”



## Inclusive Communication Hub

[www.inclusivecommunication.scot](http://www.inclusivecommunication.scot)



**Inclusive  
Communication  
Hub**

We have continued to advocate for the adoption of the principles of Inclusive Communication via the Inclusive Communication Hub. The

Inclusive Communication Hub has experienced steady growth through on-going content development and sustained promotion with key partner organisations.

We utilised the Hub as a platform to stress the importance of ensuring key public health messages about the COVID-19 pandemic are shared in a variety of accessible formats. To achieve this, we highlighted relevant resources featured on the Hub which provide an overview of the basic principles of inclusive communication and accessible information.

We created a dedicated resources page which signposts to information and guidance about the response to the pandemic that is being produced in accessible formats, such as audio, British Sign Language (BSL) and easy read.

### **What difference has our Inclusive Communication Hub made?**

A Disability Equality Scotland member commented on the importance of the Inclusive Communication Hub:

“This is a fantastic site to go to get more information on inclusive comms.”

“Overall, you have great content. Such a valuable resource that is needed more than ever.”



## Easy Read Service

[www.disabilityequality.scot/easy-read-service](http://www.disabilityequality.scot/easy-read-service)



Easy  
Read  
Hub

Disability Equality Scotland provides an Easy Read service to all sectors as part of our commitment towards improving access to information for all.

Easy Read is an accessible format that makes written information easier to understand by using simple, jargon free language, shorter sentences and supporting images.

In this reporting period we have completed 93 Easy Read projects for key partners, including the COVID-19 Self-Isolation Bill Consultation and Transport Scotland's Annual Delivery Plan. We completed repeat jobs for the ALLIANCE, Inclusion Scotland, Police Scotland, and established new connections with Scottish Labour, Connecting Scotland, RNID and the Poverty and Inequality Commission.

By producing Easy Read documents, we provide disabled people with the chance to interact and engage with relevant topics and have their views heard. We are encouraged that the Scottish Government continues to recognise the need for Easy Read. We have had a steady increase of Easy Read requests over the last 12 months, which is very encouraging.

### **What difference have our Easy Read Service made?**

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an exceptional increase in Easy Read requests. In many cases, this is due to increased demand for Equality Impact Assessments to meet Public Sector Equality Duties and ensuring that disabled people are involved in all decision and communications made during this fast-moving environment.

We have received positive comments about our Easy Read Service:



**“We’re all really impressed with your responsiveness, flexibility and quick turnaround times.”**

**“a thanks + endorsement from the Minister (Kevin Stewart – Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care)”**

**“EasyRead have done a great job with the updates we had asked for. The images they have chosen all work well, so there is no need to look at using our campaign poster image which will also keep things easier.”**

**“Really grateful for all the brilliant work you have done on this for us. For me it has been really interesting to see how reports are turned into easy read and I will be using this as an example in training of how things should be done.”**

## **Easy Read Training**



We would like to thank Garfield Weston Foundation for the funding received to develop our Easy Read training course during this period. Since the launch of the course, it has been well received across organisations wishing to make their communications accessible to all.

The overall aim of the Easy Read Training course is to help professionals produce best practice easy read information that works for their audience.

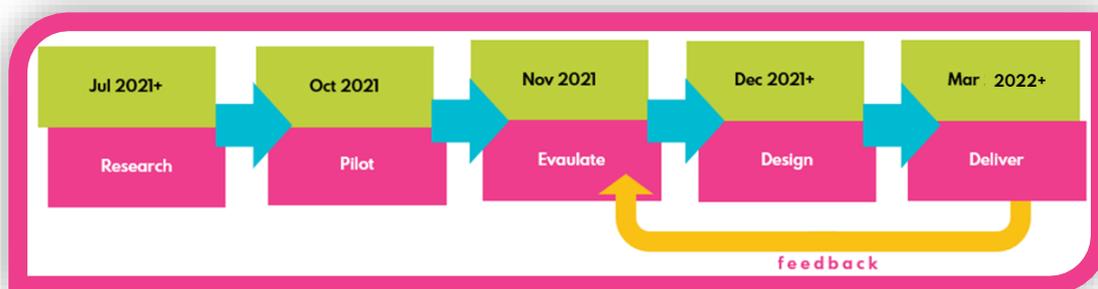
To design the training course, we utilised the expertise we have accumulated internally via our Easy Read team, however we



supplemented this with the lived experience of those with learning disabilities, seeking their feedback during the development phase.

We have extensive experience of working with people with a learning disability and involved them in the production of this training course. Together with partners, we designed a course, which delivers the basic principles of inclusive communication and incorporate practical exercises of converting text to simple language and finding appropriate images to complement the text.

The training was designed in such a way that it would work remotely, via an online delivery in line with current Scottish Government restrictions on physical distancing and we will be planning future face to face sessions. The training sessions have been designed to be interactive, with practical exercises and plenty of opportunities for discussion. We tailor the training course for each client's needs, discussing what they hope to get out of the course in advance.



We have promoted and advertised the course with key organisations, such as local authorities, NHS as well as community groups wishing to be inclusive in their communications.

The training course is now available at cost and proving to be very successful.

By the end of the funding period, Disability Equality Scotland has:



- designed, tested and evaluated an online Easy Read training course
- run a free pilot Easy Read training session
- delivered 5 Easy Read public courses with two more fully booked public courses to deliver in May 2022
- opened 10 more dates for public courses due to demand
- registered with the CPD Standards Office.
- We have delivered Easy Read training to almost 40 organisations across Scotland and the rest of the UK

## What difference have our Easy Read Training made?

Since the launch of the public Easy Read training courses, there has been a good demand for courses from a range of organisations in Scotland. Some organisations are choosing to send multiple staff, and some have asked delegates to report back to their teams. Importantly, 100% of trainees would recommend the training to a friend or a colleague.





In addition, 100% of trainees have reported an increase in their easy read knowledge and skills and 95% have increased their confidence and awareness of accessible information. Beyond Easy Read, many trainees say they will be more mindful of their general communications in the future.

We have received some positive feedback from trainees:

**“Can’t stress enough how useful I found this training and how wonderful Lucy was! Really felt like the information was easy to understand and was presented in a way that made sense”**

**“Thank you, for a very engaging, informative and enlightening course. I learned an awful lot and I hope to put into practice very soon. The time flew by very quickly”**

**“I have already recommended the course to my colleagues. I found the course really helpful in bringing together the little knowledge that I already had. I feel much more confident creating easy read information and documents”.**

**“I found this training one of most useful I've done in my current role in terms of building a genuinely usable skill. In addition, it also gave me a broader understanding of some of the considerations involved in communicating with people with learning disabilities, even outside of the easy read context. The materials were very clear and were well explained by the trainer.”**



## Weekly Polls

[www.yoursayondisability.scot](http://www.yoursayondisability.scot)



**Your  
Say On  
Disability**

Our weekly polls are a way of gathering feedback from our members on issues that affect everyone.

We have conducted 48 poll questions, resulting in a total of 8,049 responses in this reporting period.

1. National Care Service (5 April 2021)
2. Public Appointments (12 April 2021)
3. Basic Income (19 April 2021)
4. Improving Traveline Services (26 April 2021)
5. Scottish Parliament Election 2021 (3 May 2021)
6. Commissioner for Autism and Learning Disability (10 May 2021)
7. Care Services Definitions (17 May 2021)
8. Support for Young People (24 May 2021)
9. Online Meetings and Events (31 May 2021)
10. Carers Week (7 June 2021)
11. Hate Crime Stats (14 June 2021)
12. Street Clutter (21 June 2021)
13. Long COVID-19 (28 June 2021)
14. Face Coverings Legal Requirement (5 July 2021)
15. Easing of COVID-19 restrictions (July 2021)
16. Universal Credit (19 July 2021)
17. Return to Public Transport (26 July 2021)
18. Vaccine Passports (2 August 2021)
19. COVID-19-19 Vaccination Programme (9 August 2021)
20. Junk Food Promotions (16 August 2021)
21. Tokyo 2020 Paralympics (23 August 2021)
22. Low Emission Zones Exemptions (30 August 2021)
23. Four-day Working Week (6 September 2021)
24. National Disability Strategy (13 September 2021)
25. COVID-19 Public Inquiry (20 September 2021)



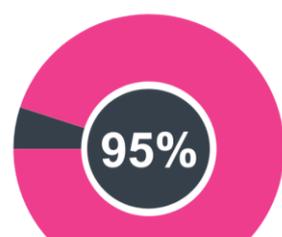
26. Easy Read (27 September 2021)
27. National Care Service: Access to Care and Support (4 October 2021)
28. National Care Service: Range of Care Services (11 October 2021)
29. Travel Assistance Cards and Apps (18 October 2021)
30. COVID-19 Booster Vaccination (25 October 2021)
31. COP26 (1 November 2021)
32. Vaccine Certification Scheme (8 November 2021)
33. Response to COVID-19: Accessible Information (15 November 2021)
34. Accessible Toilets (22 November 2021)
35. Face Coverings (29 November 2021)
36. Bus Station Passenger Assistance (6 December 2021)
37. Ending the Need for Food Banks (13 December 2021)
38. Changes to COVID-19 Guidance (10 January 2022)
39. ScotRail consultation: Changes to Ticket Office Opening Hours (17 January 2022)
40. Postal Services (24 January 2022)
41. NHS 24: 111 Service (31 January 2022)
42. New Fire Safety Rules (7 February 2022)
43. Reducing Car Travel (14 February 2022)
44. Pavement Parking Exemptions (21 February 2022)
45. COVID-19 Legal Restrictions (28 February 2022)
46. Public Sector Equality Duty: Inclusive Communication (7 March 2022)
47. Accessible Rented Housing (14 March 2022)
48. Public Sector Equality Duty: Assessing and Reviewing Policies and Practices (28 March 2022)

Noteworthy polls include:

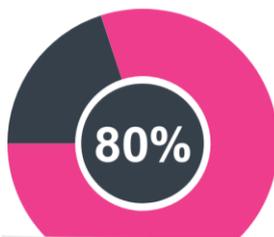
- **Pavement Parking Ban Consultation:** An overwhelming 95% (964 respondents), do not agree with the conditions that would allow local authorities to consider making certain streets exempt from the pavement parking ban.



- **Face Coverings:** The majority of respondents (80%) believed that face coverings should remain a legal requirement in Scotland.
- **Basic Income:** There was overwhelming support from respondents (92%) who believe that disabled people in Scotland would benefit from the introduction of a Basic Income as a means to reduce poverty.
- **Reducing Car Travel:** The majority of respondents (92% – 365 respondents) believed that the Transport Scotland strategy to achieve a 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030 is not achievable.
- **Online Meetings and Events:** The vast majority of respondents (93% - 345 respondents) have found online meetings and events easier to join.



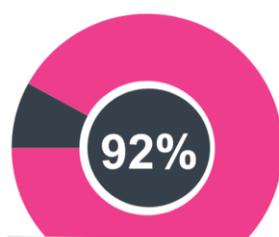
Do not agree with the proposed exemptions for the **pavement parking ban** (1,039 responses)



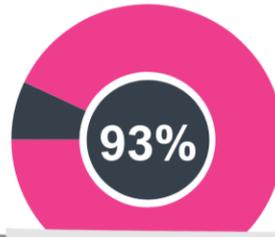
Believed **face coverings** should remain a legal requirement (467 responses)



Think disabled people would benefit from the introduction of a **Basic Income** (408 responses)



Do not agree with the strategy to **reduce car travel by 20%** (396 responses)



Found **online meetings** easier to join than face-to-face (372 responses)

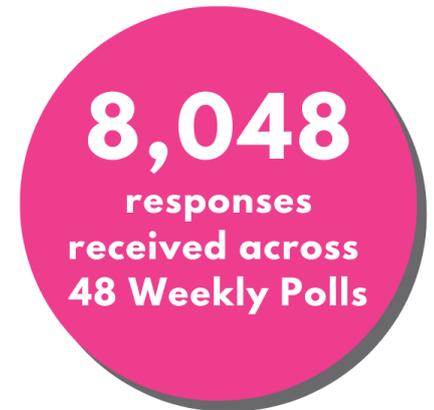
## What difference have the Weekly Polls made?

Weekly polls have received praise and recognition from key stakeholders and contributed to developing legislation, service improvement, consultations, Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) and influenced policy and guidance relating to COVID-19 recovery.

An example of areas our weekly polls have influenced includes:

- Weekly poll summary reports to respond to consultations and call for views, including: A National Care Service for Scotland, Adult Disability Payment, COVID-19 Public Inquiry, Reducing Car Travel, Pavement Parking Ban and Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Christina McKelvie, Minister for Equalities and Older People praised the weekly polls, stating that our survey work had been incredibly helpful in planning COVID-19 recovery.
- Poll on the NHS 111 service contributed to further development and improvement of the service to meet the needs of disabled people. NHS 24: “I cannot express how grateful I am that you have put this together. It looks fantastic, the data collated will be crucial to the future developments at NHS 24.”
- The results of the accessible toilets poll were raised by Monica Lennon MSP at the Scottish Parliament discussion for International Day of Disabled People.

We have also taken the opportunity to raise the importance of our members views from poll as evidence in Scottish Parliament Committees, Cross Party Groups and in Parliamentary Questions:





## Parliamentary Questions

- 12 July 2021: To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with (a) clinically vulnerable people, (b) disabled people and (c) unpaid carers regarding the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.
  - Answered by: Humza Yousaf 24 August 2021 “Three Disabled People’s Organisations (Inclusion Scotland, Disability Equality Scotland and Glasgow Disability Alliance) were consulted on the easing of restrictions.”
  
- 12 November 2021: To ask the Scottish Government how it will embed accessible design standards into the future provision of electric car charging points.
  - Answered by: Graeme Dey 25 November 2021 “Transport Scotland is also working in partnership with Scottish Enterprise through the Can-Do Innovation Challenge framework to improve the design of electric vehicle charge points to make them even more accessible. This project is being advanced with input from the disabled community and organisations including Motability, the Mobility and Access Committee, The Roads for all forum, Perth and Kinross Inclusive Living Centre and Disability Equality Scotland.”
  
- 11 October 2021: To ask the Scottish Government what training it has funded or provided in each of the last five years to support disabled people to use public transport.
  - Answered by: Graeme Dey 8 November 2021 “Working with Disability Equality Scotland, Transport Scotland has undertaken a series of webinars and polls with disabled people and disabled people’s organisations exploring a range of issues important to disabled people, including how confidence in returning to public transport post-pandemic could be strengthened”



## Scottish Parliament Cross Party Groups

- **Disability:** From June 2021, Disability Equality Scotland took on the Secretariat role for the Cross-Party Group on Disability, convened by Jeremy Balfour MSP, and co-convened by Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP. We are fortunate to have a positive working relationship with both MSPs and we have opportunity to influence the agenda items discussed in this forum, helping to keep pertinent issues for our members on the table.
- **Sustainable Transport:** Disability Equality Scotland is a non-MSP Group Member.

## Scottish Parliament Committees

- Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee: Petition 1872: Improve the Reliability of Island Ferry Services.
  - Question from the Minister of Transport to the Convener “Whether the Scottish Government has considered how access to ferry services can be widened, particularly in the case of younger people, people who have disabilities that may make using the service difficult, and those on lower incomes.”
  - Response: “Since the launch of the Ferries Accessibility fund in 2015 by the Scottish Government, the fund has provided £429,000 in match funding to 26 different projects. This has not just covered improved accessibility to vessels and Infrastructure, it has supported projects such as the Hate Crime Charter for Disability Equality Scotland and Sensory Packs and staff training for the National Autistic Society. The seventh round has been launched with submissions due to be reviewed early in 2022.”
- Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee: Draft Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4)



- Submission by Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS), 3 February 2022 “We welcome the emphasis on the 20-minute neighbourhood principle, which MACS has been active in advocating, for example in a series of events with the Health and Social Care Alliance and Disability Equality Scotland.”

The Weekly Poll has continued to be a vital method for gathering the views of our members on a variety of topics. Our weekly summary reports contributed to Equality Impact Assessments and influenced Scottish Government policy and guidance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The polls received praise from our members and various stakeholders, including policy officials and partner organisations.

**“The weekly polls are fantastic with the easy read attachments which means I can join in.”**

**“There is something here for everyone and the website is easy to navigate, which makes a difference. I also like the yes/no of the polls and layout of the newsletters and annual report. Feels fresh and relevant and keeps you engaged.”**

**“I would like to thank you for all the communications this past year. They have been a source of help and reassurance for me. Also, I would like to thank you for sending me my exempt card. Thanks again, stay safe and well.”**

## **Disability Hate Crime**

[www.disabilitysafety.scot](http://www.disabilitysafety.scot)



**Disability  
Safety  
Hub**

The Disability Safety Hub launched in October 2018 to coincide with National Hate Crime Week.



This hub has two main aims:

1. To raise awareness of disability hate crime, helping disabled people to understand what a hate crime is.
2. The Hub also wants to help disabled people to report hate crime and shows the different ways you can do this.

On this Hub you will find helpful resources, including case studies and videos of disabled people talking about their own experiences of hate crime.

In response to COVID-19, we adapted content on the Hub to reflect guidance and resources, which were being produced to provide support to people during the pandemic. We developed our own mental wellbeing guide, which signposts to relevant resources, including the SAMH 'Mental Health Information Hub'. We also developed a new resource category that is dedicated to scam awareness in response to the increase in scam related crime during the pandemic.

To assist with promotion, and to raise awareness of Disability Hate Crime, we worked with Police Scotland to host a webinar during National Hate Crime week in October 2021. This was an opportunity to generate content for the Disability Safety Hub and to provide an update on the Hate Crime Charter.

## **What difference has The Disability Safety Hub made?**

We receive ongoing positive feedback since the launch of our Disability Safety Hub.

**“Thank you for creating a new resource category on scam awareness. My mother was targeted during the pandemic, and it is very disturbing that scammers will often target older and disabled people. The more information that’s out there on awareness of scams and how to report them, the better.”**



## Accessible Travel

[www.accessibletravel.scot](http://www.accessibletravel.scot)



**Accessible  
Travel  
Hub**

The Hub has continued to receive positive levels of engagement, which has been achieved through on-going updates from transport providers on the measures they have introduced to make transport more accessible and safer for disabled people. Members of Transport Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework Steering group also provide content for the hub to promote shared learning.

In particular, we shared updates regarding changes to services and public health guidance in response to COVID-19.

We continued to utilise the Hub to promote the Hate Crime Charter and were delighted to secure support from the Community Transport Association (CTA), ZetTrans Regional Transport Partnership and the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS).

These logos were added to the [Hate Crime Charter supporters page](#) on the Hub taking the total number of supporters to 14. We also provided progress on the Ferries for All project, which further highlighted the commitment to create a public transport network that is safer and inclusive for all.

### Events

Due to COVID-19, we continued to deliver transport events via online webinars. During this year we have hosted four webinar events, which resulted in engagement with 175 people, including disabled people, transport providers, local authorities, and equality groups about their experiences of accessible travel.

The webinars covered the following topics:

- Journey Planning, 24 May 2021
- Return to Public Transport, 19 August 2021



- Assistance Cards, 02 November 2021
- Staff training – 24 February 2022
- 20m Neighbourhood – 4 themed events, 2021-2022

All webinars were recorded and can be viewed on the webinar page of the Accessible Travel Hub: <https://accessibletravel.scot/webinars/>

### **Exploring Scotland's 20-minute neighbourhoods**

We worked in partnership with the Health and Social Care ALLIANCE and Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) to host a series of four webinars entitled 'Exploring Scotland's 20-minute neighbourhoods'.

This series was borne out of an original weekly poll and webinar hosted by Disability Equality Scotland in collaboration with Transport Scotland and MACS where disabled peoples' immediate concerns and questions about the concept were discussed, which led us to develop the idea of a series of discussions with colleagues.

The series of four webinar events which took place in summer 2021 provided opportunity to discuss and explore different aspects of the 20-minute neighbourhood including: getting around and accessing services; social connection; housing and greenspace; and designing in the community. A key thread throughout events was to consider how 20-minute neighbourhoods can be inclusive for everyone and uphold the rights of a range of groups.

The series concluded with an agreement that to achieve 20-minute neighbourhoods, people must be at the heart of planning, design, and delivery. Each neighbourhood is unique, and its design and implementation will have to be tailored to the specific needs of individual populations. Joined up working across the public, private and third sector is essential and the voice of lived experience will need to be an equal partner in this process.



The full report can be downloaded here: <https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Exploring-20-minute-neighbourhoods-report.pdf>

## Hate Crime on Public Transport

We worked with our partners at Transport Scotland, Police Scotland, British Transport Police, Sustran and People First Scotland to launch the National Hate Crime Charter on 24 March 2021.

We produced a promotional toolkit to help spread the message of the Hate Crime Charter. Twitter and Facebook messaging from transport partners including ScotRail, Stagecoach, FirstBus, CalMac and NorthLink Ferries used the images we produced to promote the Charter.



We launched on social media and reached over 300,000 people.

We designed and developed an animated video to help promote the Charter and this was shared widely on social media.

We received several retweets of the campaign messages from key equality stakeholders, including Interfaith Glasgow, Victim Support Scotland, LGBT Youth Scotland, Glasgow Disability Alliance, Guide Dogs Scotland, and Scottish Commission for People with a Learning Disability (SCLD).

## Ministerial support

The campaign experienced recognition from Scottish Ministers, including a retweet of the campaign materials from Christina McKelvie, Minister for Older People and Equalities.



We worked closely with Transport Scotland and had the endorsement of Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity Michael Matheson. He said:

**“I fully support the launch of the national Hate Crime Charter for public transport. I commend the work of Disability Equality Scotland and partners for promoting this zero-tolerance approach.**

**We want Scotland to have a transport network that is safe for everyone to use and this Charter will help to raise awareness of hate crime, in all its forms, and remind everyone that it will not be tolerated.”**

## **Supporters**

We have built on our established relationships with the three key transport providers, Stagecoach, FirstBus and ScotRail to continue work to roll out the Charter on their services.

We have secured fifteen supporters signed up and pledging their support to the Charter:

- British Transport Police
- CalMac Ferries
- Community Transport Association
- Disability Equality Scotland
- FirstBus
- Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)
- NorthLink Ferries
- People First Scotland
- Police Scotland
- ScotRail
- Sustran
- Stagecoach
- Strathclyde Passenger Transport



- Transport Scotland
- Zetrans

## **Training package**

We have worked with Police Scotland to host a webinar discussion during National Hate Crime week and taken the feedback from this event to inform the design and development of a hate crime training package for transport staff. This will be piloted during June 2022 ready for roll out.

<http://accessibletravel.scot/hate-crime/>

## **What difference has the Hate Crime Charter made?**

The Hate Crime Charter pilot reached over 1,255,671 passengers in an eight-week period.

The British Transport Police can tell us that 24 reports of hate crime were made during our pilot period. Of these, one came from the pilot area of Fife; specifically, Kirkcaldy train station where our poster was on display.

Awareness has been raised amongst transport staff who feel better equipped to recognise and report hate crime. There is also an acknowledgement from staff that they would benefit from further training. At the pre-pilot stage, 49% wanted further training; by the end of the pilot this figure was 79%.

Fifteen partners have signed up to pledge their support to the Charter and will be offered training in disability awareness and hate crime. This number is growing all the time.

This work supports the Accessible Travel Framework vision that “all disabled people can travel with the same freedom, choice, dignity and opportunity as other citizens.”



## Access Panel Network



**Access  
Panel  
Network**

Access Panels are the community experts when it comes to improving accessibility in the built environment. Their lived experience puts them in a unique position to provide advice and support to a wide range of

organisations and bodies across society. Access Panels are primarily made up of volunteers, the majority of which are disabled people, or care for a disabled person.

They meet on a regular basis, usually monthly, to discuss issues in their local community, which affect disabled people, and work towards removing barriers to independent living in their communities to ensure disabled people have access to the same choice, dignity and control as others in our society.

There are currently 38 active Access Panels across Scotland, from Harris and Orkney to the Scottish Borders and everywhere in between. Panel membership varies between 5 and 150 disabled members, and it is estimated that there are around 1000 Access Panel members in total across Scotland. Not all members are actively involved volunteers, and many contribute in other ways towards their panel, by sharing information, or participating in consultations; other members may simply wish to be kept informed of disability work in their area.

As Panels have typically grown organically around the needs of their locality, they vary greatly in their focus and remit however, they are primarily committed to improving access and equality in its widest form which means access to the physical environment, Education, Housing, Health, Transport, Leisure & Recreation and Social Justice amongst other areas.

COVID-19 resilience has been the theme for many Access Panels throughout 2020 and 2021. Access Panels have performed



extraordinarily well considering the challenges they have faced, having to move from physical meetings to virtual ones. The Panels have embraced online working and have found new ways in which to hold local authorities and other stakeholders to account.

Access Panels have told us that they have continued to ensure that accessibility remains at the forefront of people's minds, even as we continue to work remotely. Despite the lockdowns and remote working, we have seen an increase in Access Panels, with 4 new Access Panels joining the network and increasing the representation for disabled people's voices to be heard.

Disability Equality Scotland continued to see increased attendance at the yearly Access Panel Conference. Feedback suggested that this was because many disabled people didn't need to spend hours travelling to and from the event and could instead join from the comfort of their own homes.

We remain aware of the fact that public transport still isn't accessible for disabled people and we will work with the Access Panels to make sure that remote working isn't used as a substitute for a poorly accessible transport infrastructure.

## **Access Panel Grant**

### **Overview and Progress**

The Access Panel Grant (APG) is a fund designed to help increase the capacity and outreach of Access Panels right across Scotland. The majority of Access Panels are staffed solely by volunteers who are passionate about increasing access and social inclusion for disabled people in their community.

Specifically, the Access Panel Grant has enabled Access Panels to remain incredibly active and continue their vital work even throughout lockdown, by using this grant in inventive and resourceful ways. Naturally, we have seen a decrease in the amount claimed for things like travel expenses and room hire but an increase in the



number of claims for things like ICT equipment, software packages, Zoom subscriptions, and closed captioning services.

Notwithstanding the pandemic, Access Panels have still been active in their local communities and as such have needed access to these vital funds to ensure they can carry out their work. Access Panels have continued to ensure that premises are accessible and used the Access Panel Grant to help support their access auditing activities, especially as society reopened following lockdown.

With support from Disability Equality Scotland, Access Panels have successfully moved their activity online where possible, continuing to provide crucial input to proposed changes to their local areas, such as the development of the Spaces for People initiative and COVID-19-related changes to shared space and the built environment.

Likewise, increased engagement opportunities with elected representatives and their local Councils through video conferencing software has also been made possible through the Grant and technical support and guidance from Disability Equality Scotland. 2022's Annual Access Panel Conference also took place online, with record attendance from a greater geographical spread of Panels and partners.

Both Disability Equality Scotland and the Access Panel Network will build on this experience in increasing engagement through promoting digital participation and skills building; however, face-to-face interaction is still critical for building partnerships and relationships, so we look forward to meeting again soon.

## Staffing

Our staff team have continued to work effectively and efficiently from home and in the office (in line with government guidelines) this last year. Our operational outcomes continue to align with our growing strategic aspirations, and our success is down to the commitment, talents and diversity of our staff. That is why we value and develop



our employees to succeed in their careers, as well as contribute to our success.

We aim to provide good jobs at a fair pay and purposeful work, along with the structure and skills to make a difference.

## **Structure, governance and management**

Disability Equality Scotland was established under a Memorandum of Association, which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed by the Articles of Association.

Disability Equality Scotland is a charity limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The liability of each member in the event of winding up is limited to £1.

### **Recruitment and appointment of new trustees**

Although not a public body, our board recruitment is competency based.

The skills, knowledge, and experience on our board during 2021-2022 include HR Management, Governance, Strategy Planning, Business Management, Risk Management and Business Continuity Planning, Inclusive Design Principles, Equalities, Access Panel involvement and personal lived experience as a disabled person.

Board members serve a term of three years and are voted in at our Annual General Meeting. Board members can serve a maximum of two terms.

The role of the Board is to oversee the work of the organisation and to make strategic decisions about its future.

Our Convener leads the board and offers support to our Chief Executive Officer.



## Our Funding

### **Promoting Equality and Cohesion Fund, The Scottish Government**

For this project, we are committed to engaging and disseminating information to disabled people through our publications and online newsletters, easy-read briefings, and events.

We also stated we would improve Access to Social Justice for disabled people, through representation of their views, needs and rights and by supporting the work of those committed to improving equality and inclusion in Scotland.

Finally, we administer the Access Panel Funding Grant to support and protect on-going volunteer work, to reduce barriers to inclusion and equality at local and national levels.

This fund ended 30 September 2021 and was preceded by the Equality and Human Rights Fund managed by Inspiring Scotland.

### **Equality and Human Rights Fund, Inspiring Scotland**

Our focus with this fund is Disability, Equality, Access and Engagement.

As a national Disabled Peoples' Organisation, we will continue our work to make life more accessible, equal and inclusive for disabled people in Scotland.

We will do this by giving disabled people a voice and opportunity to participate in a fulfilling life through our consultation, engagement and inclusive communications.

This fund allows us to develop our work around Hate Crime, Accessible Travel, Inclusive Design and Inclusive Communication, working with our members and Access Panel Network to promote access in its widest sense, thus promoting a life of dignity, respect, choice and independence.



## **Section 10, The Scottish Government**

We are the umbrella organisation for Access Panels across all of Scotland and work with other partners to improve access and inclusion. We work to empower and promote the rights of disabled people. Our role is to influence and effect change, both locally and nationally, through the network of Access Panels and to support them to work in partnership to address local issues.

### **Accessible Transport for Disabled People Grant Funding, Transport Scotland**

The aim of this project is to work with Transport Scotland and relevant groups to improve the accessibility of transport in Scotland. Our role is to ensure disabled people are informed and included in each stage of the process, including proposing the issues to agreeing actions, to monitoring and feeding back on successes and areas for improvement.

To ensure our member's voices are heard and integral to plans and policies we also sit on the Accessible Travel Framework Steering Group, which looks to progress the Accessible Travel Framework for Scotland (Going Further).

More recently, and through our input to transport transition planning for emergence from lockdown, we have been invited by Transport Scotland to sit on the Transport Equalities Network to feed in the lived experiences of our members to work towards making public transport more accessible for everyone.



## **Ferries Accessibility, Transport Scotland**

We received funding from the Ferries Accessibility Fund from April 2021 to March 2022 to work with Northlink Ferries to undertake scoping work with staff and customers on the topic of disability hate crime, developing a Hate Crime Charter for the ferry network.

## **Exemption Card Campaign, The Scottish Government**

This project developed in response to the continued demand and need for face covering exemptions for many disabled people and those with long term or limiting conditions who are being challenged for not wearing a face covering. We administer the Scottish Government's exemption card scheme, including fielding telephone and online requests for exemption cards and fulfilling these requests via post and digitally.

We regularly provided feedback to Scottish Ministers on the issues being raised with us through the helpline.

## **Garfield Weston Foundation**

This one-year fund has allowed Disability Equality Scotland to develop and deliver our Easy Read training course.

## **Reference and Administrative Details**

### **Registered Company number**

SC243392 (Scotland)

### **Registered Charity number**

SCO31893

### **Registered office**

Suite 204B, The Pentagon Centre, 36 Washington Street, Glasgow G3 8AZ



## Board of Trustees

The following trustees served on the board from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

- Linda Bamford (Appointed 14 November 2016)
- Dorothy McKinney (Appointed 30 March 2017)
- Maureen Morrison (Appointed 4 December 2017)
- Scott Stewart (Appointed 5 December 2017)
- Kenny Milne (Appointed 17 May 2018)
- Carolyn Griffiths (Appointed 4 May 2018)
- Colin Millar (Appointed 4 May 2018)
- Lauren Asher (Appointed 15 October 2020)
- Rhianne Forrest (Appointed 15 October 2020)
- Susan Fulton (Appointed 24 May 2018; Term ended 25 August 2021)

## Independent examiner

Community Accountancy Scotland, Cameron House, Forthside Way,  
Stirling, FK8 1QZ

Approved by order of the board of trustees on .....

and signed on its behalf by: Linda Bamford, Convener



## Summary Presentation of Financial Accounts

1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022

<b>Income</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Restricted Fund</b>		
Scottish Government Equality Unit		£95,000
Access Panel Grant		£45,000
Scottish Government Section 10		£80,132
Transport Scotland		£49,728
Ferries Accessibility		£12,027
Exemption Card Campaign		£57,466
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£339,353</b>
<b>Unrestricted Fund</b>		
Easy Read Translation Service		£27,836
Sponsorships		£4,017
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£31,853</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Allocated to Access Panel Grant		£23,929
Salaries		£199,946



Rent and service charges	£12,359
Telephone	£2,810
Postage and stationery	£49,316
Subscriptions. recruitment and training	£13,135
Travel and subsistence	£714
IT Development	£7,187
Interpretation	£4,998
Bank charges	£716
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	£257
Accountancy Fees	£10,152
Legal and Professional Fees	£1,631
Insurance	£4,618
Events and Promotional Materials	£7,430
Governance	£1,025
<b>Total</b>	<b>£340,223</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>	<b>£30,983</b>



## Balance Sheet

as at 31 March 2022

	2022	2021
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors		£6,432
Cash at bank and in hand		£76,786
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>£83,218</b>
<b>Creditors</b>		
Amounts falling due within one year		£2,576
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>£81,058</b>
<b>Funds</b>		
Unrestricted funds		£45,159
Restricted funds		£35,899
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>£81,058</b>

Full financial statements which have been examined by Community Accountancy Scotland are available from the company on request.



## Disability Equality Scotland

Scottish Charity Number: SC031893

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G2 8AZ

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Facebook @DisabilityEqualityScotland

Twitter @DEScotTweets

Website: [www.disabilityequality.scot](http://www.disabilityequality.scot)

## Our Sponsors

We are grateful for the generosity of our sponsors from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022:

- Motability