



**Disability Unit consultation**

**Disability Action Plan 2023 to 2024**

**Unite the Union  
Response**

**October 2023**

# Disability Action Plan 2023 to 2024 consultation

## Unite the Union Response

### Introduction

Unite is the UK's largest trade union with over one million members across all sectors of the economy including health, transport, manufacturing, financial services, food and agriculture, information technology, service industries, construction, energy and utilities, local government and the not for profit sector. Unite also organises in the community, enabling those who are not in employment to be part of our union.

**Unite agrees with the TUC response to this consultation and would like to add the following points.**

**1a. To what extent do you agree with proposals to review funding support and create an online hub to improve access to elected office for disabled people?**

Select one answer

**Strongly agree**

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know or unsure

**1b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here. (Suggested maximum 500 words)**

Unite is concerned regarding the accessibility of the online hub. Also, there should be sufficient and accessible information for those who are selecting candidates.

**2a. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to create a hub of guidance about playground accessibility?**

Select one answer

Strongly agree

**Somewhat agree**

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know or unsure

Accessibility of the playground should include children with impairments and parents with impairments. It should not be assumed that either the child or the parent can support each other in accessing play facilities. Non-disabled children should not be excluded from opportunities to play because their parent(s) has an impairment. Access to playgrounds should include entry to the park, distance from Accessible Parking and Accessible transport links should be considered – particularly around public information about use of the park. Also, steps, seating and the provision of RADAR Toilets should be considered.

**2b. To what extent do you agree that the voluntary standards for playground accessibility should be made mandatory?**

Select one answer

**Strongly agree**

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know or unsure

**3a. To what extent do you agree with the proposed plan to increase disability inclusion in emergency planning and resilience work?**

Select one answer

**Strongly agree**

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know or unsure

**3b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.**

Regarding inclusion, it is essential to have “Of and For” disabled people’s organisations. Not simply organisation that provide services or support disabled people.

**3c. If there are particular DPOs that you think should be engaged in this area, please share them.**

Organisations that are “of and for” disabled workers include DPAC, the TUC Disabled Members Committee and individual Trade Unions. Also, People First and the Speaking Up Groups.

**4a. To what extent do you agree with the need to focus on the emerging area of climate adaptations and mitigations?**

Select one answer

**Strongly agree**

**Somewhat agree**

**Neither agree nor disagree**

**Somewhat disagree**

**Strongly disagree**

**Don't know or unsure**

Unite is concerned that this question is suggesting limiting disabled people access to support since they need more resources to overcome barriers created by society. If that is the case, then we must emphasise that the lack of accessible and inclusive public transport system means that disabled people need to seek personal solutions. This may lead to greater use of resources and more emission. Therefore, the focus should be on reducing emission by creating an inclusive accessible environment for all.

**4c. The Disability Unit has already identified Clean Air Zones (CAZ) and the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) policies as an area for action. Please tell us if there are other climate adaptations or mitigations that require greater disability inclusion?**

Accessible, eco and green homes, public spaces and transport.

**5a. To what extent do you agree that this scheme would give increased confidence to disabled customers when accessing businesses or services?**

**Select one answer**

**Strongly agree**

**Somewhat agree**

**Neither agree nor disagree**

**Somewhat disagree**

**Strongly disagree**

**Don't know or unsure**

**5b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here.**

Unite advocates the Social Model of disability and therefore, do not agree with "Disability Awareness" training. Disability equality is an Equality Issue. Therefore, any training about Disability should be an Equality Training. Employers and service providers need to know that Disability is not about being aware of an individual's needs but it is about knowing that it is illegal to discriminate. Therefore, there should be training in Equalities, so that those responsible know that they need to support all disabled people. In addition, they will understand that they have a duty to make their service accessible and seek to find solutions that suits both everyone as well as individuals.

Issuing a Badge could be beneficial however, it is important that it is monitored and inspected properly and regularly. For example, what happens when the trained person leaves or is on leave? Too often there is a sign for a hearing loop and

when someone needs it is found the staff do not know how to use it or some cases, it actually does not exist.

**7a. To what extent do you agree with the proposed plan to work more closely with the guide dog sector to establish what more the government can do to address access refusals of guide dogs?**

Select one answer

**Strongly agree**

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know or unsure

This should be extended to other support animals; guide dogs satisfy a specific need. There should be a clear definition of what is a support animal – an animal that has received training from a recognised body that is compatible with support needed by the person's acknowledged impairment.

**7b. To what extent do you agree that increasing fines would address the issue of access refusals for guide dogs?**

Select one answer

**Strongly agree**

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know or unsure

Unite supports sanctions including fines as well as compulsory Disability Equality training.

Employers should be compelled to complete and audit their entire workplace to establish compliance.

**8a. To what extent do you agree that access to assistive technology would be improved by better-informed advice from public sector staff?**

Select one answer

**Strongly agree**

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know or unsure

**8b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here. (Suggested maximum 500 words)**

Unite supports greater access to assistive technology. However, in our experience there is a lack of Information Technology and Communications and guidance in workplaces. Some employers spend large sums of money on multi-Media meeting rooms that do not work and would reduce accessibility if and when used. Therefore, clear guidance on all aspects is needed, including who is funding adaptations or devices, and how disabled people can access and or request these resources.

**9a. To what extent do you agree with each of the following proposed areas of focus?**

- transitions to adulthood
- accessibility of public spaces and transport
- bullying, personal safety and impact on wellbeing
- early identification of need and support for families

Unite agrees with all the above as important issues with the aim of improving the way government services for disabled children work together.

**9b. If there are other issues that you think this taskforce should consider, or you would like to explain your answer, please do so here. (Suggested maximum 500 words)**

Bullying and reduction of self-esteem due to repeated verbal abuse and repeated exclusions is very important and often overlooked. This is also the case with physical attacks.

**10a. To what extent do you agree with each of the following proposed areas of focus?**

- access to parenting support in health and care services
- Family Courts and child protection
- domestic abuse support

Unite supports improving support for disabled parents through bringing multiple government departments together.

**10b. If there are other issues that you think this taskforce should consider, or you would like to explain your answer, please do so here. (Suggested maximum 500 words)**

The taskforce should consider problems faced by disabled parents in employment. Also, in supporting their child education and/or accessing support.

**11a. To what extent do you agree with this proposed approach to evidence and evaluation?**

**11b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here. (Suggested maximum 500 words)**

Unite strongly agrees with this approach. This should be done in consultation with trade unions as they have the knowledge through the experiences of their members.

**12a. To what extent do you agree that DU should focus some of its evidence and insight work on anticipating future challenges for disabled people, rather than focusing solely on further exploring known needs?**

**Select one answer**

**Strongly agree**

**Somewhat agree**

**Neither agree nor disagree**

**Somewhat disagree**

**Strongly disagree**

**Don't know or unsure**

**12b. If you would like to explain your answer, please do so here. (Suggested maximum 500 words)**

Unite agrees with planning for future priorities to deal with issues such as Artificial Intelligence and algorithms, shown to perpetuate existing exclusion and undervaluing of disabled people. However, this should hinder the necessary work needed to remove barriers and wide spread discrimination faced by disabled people.