



## **Disability Independent Advisory Group**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Aims of the Disability Independent Advisory Group**

The Disability Independent Advisory Group's principle focus is to enable engagement between disabled people, community and voluntary sector organisations that support disabled people, their carers and family members, and Nottinghamshire County Council and other statutory organisations that deliver services within the geographic county of Nottinghamshire (i.e. including the city). The purpose of the group is to improve services for vulnerable and marginalised groups and individuals who live, work in or visit Nottinghamshire. The IAG is part of a broader engagement and challenge process which links to the work of the Nottinghamshire Diversity Forum and the Nottinghamshire Partnership.

#### **Defining Disability**

The Disability IAG supports the social model of disability which identifies disability as "the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by contemporary social organisation which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from the mainstream of social activities". (UPIAS 1976)

This group uses the term "social model of disability" to underpin its structure, processes and actions. We have researched many authors and accept the following to be a true representation of the "social model of disability":

Disabled people are oppressed by society's:-

1. Attitudes
2. Environment (e.g. no access, poor signage, lack of facilities)
3. Structures (e.g. spoken English, written documents, fixed work routines)

The social model argues for the removal of these barriers which impose a 'social death' on disabled people. Barrier removal enables disabled people to contribute fully as citizens and to be included in public life.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) follows the medical model and defines disability as a "physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities." That



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effect must be substantial (that is, more than minor or trivial), adverse and long term (lasting or likely to last for at least a year). This means that “not only do people with mobility impairments have rights but also disabled people with sensory impairments, learning difficulties or mental health issues, as well as many other disabled people.” (Equality and Human Rights Commission).

## **The role of the Disability Independent Advisory Group**

The Disability Independent Advisory Group roles include providing:

- A valuable platform for disabled people’s organisations, disabled people and their carers and family members
- a structured approach to working together
- A structure for engaging with other relevant partners and agencies including gaining representation on other appropriate forums
- a good opportunity to knock down some of the barriers that have been built up over time including between different areas of disability
- Opportunities to support agencies access funds and resources”.
- the chance to hold Nottinghamshire County Council and other statutory organisations to account and to advise in the design and delivery of services for disabled people
- identify priority issues that really matter to members of the group and to disabled people and for improving services to disabled people. Key themes identified for development are adult health and social care, community transport, community safety, personalisation and employment for disabled people

## **Membership of the Disability Independent Advisory Group**

Membership will be open to disabled people and carers of disabled people, voluntary organisations which represent disabled people. Members of the group shall have a clear understanding of the issues relating to disability and a commitment to training and self-development. Membership shall also be available, by invitation of the group, to appropriate strategic-level representatives of statutory organisations (local authorities, health, police etc.) who can support decision making. Representatives of organisations attending the Advisory Group must be designated officers who accept responsibility to attend and speak at the



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meeting and be able to demonstrate what has changed as a result. The group aims to ensure that a minimum of 60% of its membership shall comprise disabled people and carers of disabled people.

### **Meetings and conduct of business**

The Disability Independent Advisory Group will meet quarterly and may establish task groups to conduct detailed business on its behalf between meetings.

The Disability Independent Advisory Group may appoint from its membership to represent it at the Nottinghamshire Diversity Forum and on other groups as appropriate.

The Group will appoint a Chair on an annual basis and minutes of the meeting will be taken and circulated.

Meetings will take place at suitable venues around the County to enable as many people as possible to have an opportunity to attend.

Members of the Disability Independent Advisory Group who attend network meetings are invited to claim for re-imburement of travel expenses if they are attending in an unpaid capacity and are not able to re-claim any expenses from any other source.

As far as possible, meetings will be focused, proactive and fruitful. Meetings will be in two parts. The first part will focus on internal organisational issues; the second part will focus on engagement and consultation.

Terms of reference for the group will be reviewed annually.

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