**Greater Manchester Disability Manifesto**

(Plain English version)

1. **Introduction**

The Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) is a Disabled People’s Organisation. This means that we are run and controlled by disabled people only. This is important so that we, as disabled people, have our own voice and it is not just people speaking on our behalf.

We want all disabled people to be included in all aspects of life but we know there are often barrier to this happening. We call this the Social Model of Disability. We believe that it is not our bodies and minds that disable us, it is the obstacles or barriers that society puts in our way. By barriers we mean things like steps into buildings, inaccessible information, the way things are organised and the way disabled people are treated.

The Seven Needs for Independent Living is something that disabled people came up with as a way of looking at the different barriers that stop us from living an independent life. Things like Housing, Education, Personal Support, Transport, etc have many barriers that need to be removed before disabled people are treated equally. If these barriers are not removed, disabled people face going back into institutions and being discriminated against.

The United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which has been approved in the UK, states that disabled people should be treated as full and equal citizens with human rights and treated equally under the law. We strongly agree with this view.

With this in mind, on the 4th May 2017, there is going to be a Greater Manchester Mayoral election. This means that a new Mayor will be elected to represent the needs and views of all citizens of Greater Manchester including disabled people. The Mayor will have the power to change some services that disabled people require but they can also influence services they may not have control of.

GMCDP has written this Disability Manifesto to help the new Mayor understand how best to meet disabled people’s needs and the actions they need to take to break down barriers.

**2 Independent Living**

Disabled people often need support to live independently. Living independently is about making your own choices and having control over how you live, it doesn’t mean doing everything for yourself. To make this happen, we believe that the Mayor should work with the leaders of the 10 boroughs of Greater Manchester and the heads of health and social care to make sure that they recognise the rights of disabled people to live equally. This means making sure that:-

* Disabled people can choose where they live, whom they live with, how they want to live and not be forced to live in a situation that they don’t want.
* Disabled people have access to and control over community support services (e.g. personal support)
* Public and community services (e.g. libraries, community & Leisure centres, doctor’s surgeries, etc.) will be equally available and accessible to disabled people as they are to non-disabled people.
* All commissioned and contracted services will meet their responsibilities under Equality Act Duties. They must prove that they have and can provide accessible and inclusive services. Any jobs vacancies in these services need to be open to disabled people.
* The Mayor will fund an ongoing Disabled People’s Forum, which will have representatives of Disabled Peoples Organisation (DPO) on it to make sure that co-production happens. This means disabled people being involved and consulted from the very beginning.
* An Independent Living Fund Scheme to be set up along the lines of that in Scotland (goto http://ilf.scot/about-us/how-we-work/)
* DPOs are involved directly in any consultations involving the joining up of social care and health budgets.

1. **Housing**

Disabled people should have the right to live in our own homes. These homes, either new or being updated, should be accessible and enable independence living for disabled people. Both local and national government should use all existing powers to ensure private and social housing meet the highest access standards. Therefore the Mayoral office and relevant others:-

* Will look at what accessible housing is already available and use this information to plan for the future, making sure there are more accessible and affordable homes. At least one in ten new homes should be wheelchair accessible
* Will ensure that privately built new homes should meet Lifetime Homes Standards (homes you can live in for your whole life).
* Will make sure that the fund used to pay for specific equipment for disabled people to live in their homes, is not used by councils on other things

1. **Inclusive Further Education and Training**

We believe that Inclusive Education is best for all people. Inclusive Education is when all disabled people and non-disabled people go to the same schools together. This is a good thing because then disabled and non-disabled children can grow up together and learn about each other.

Education can mean schools, colleges and universities, or anywhere you can go to learn. It can also mean training courses that people choose to take as adults. When this document says education, it means all of these things. The Mayoral Office and relevant others should:-

* Promote Inclusive Education across Greater Manchester. The United Nations wrote a report on how important Inclusive Education is. This report should be used to influence how things happen.

* Prevent barriers for students by using the Social Model of Disability (explained in the introduction section). The best way to do this is consult with Disabled People’s Organisations.
* Share any good practice with all further education services across Greater Manchester
* Make sure that teachers are given training regularly. This training is to make sure they are kept up to date with any changes. This training should also help teachers to make sure their lessons are accessible for disabled people.
* Make sure jobs in schools such as teachers and teaching assistants are open and accessible to disabled people.
* Make sure that there are more opportunities for disabled people to apply for apprenticeships and have a good chance of getting them. This should be regularly monitored.

1. **Transport**

Disabled people should have equal access to all forms of transport including buses, trains, trams, planes and taxis. There are existing power that should be used to make these services accessible to disabled people. The Department of Transport agrees with this and have said so in their Accessible Transport Policy. The Mayoral Office and relevant others should:-

* Encourage and punish if necessary, bus companies that don’t make sure wheelchair users can access the wheelchair bay. Bus drivers should give passengers enough time to sit down before the bus moves off.
* Make a 5 year plan that makes all train stations in Greater Manchester are step free from the entrance to the platform.
* Organise a young disabled people travel training programme. This training will focus on safety and independence.
* Make repairs to lifts at trams stops a priority (within 24 hours) if there is no ramped access.
* Make sure that Manchester International Airport has hoist systems to help people get on and off planes. Customer service at airports should receive training from DPOs.
* Work with DPOs and taxi drivers. They will look at and write a report on whether it is legal to charge a disabled person more to use a taxi or to refuse to pick them up.
* Hold a meeting (Disabled Peoples Transport Summit) with DPOs about transport. This should take place with a year and a half of the new Mayor starting.

**6 Disability Hate Crime**

Disability hate crime is when someone commits a crime against you because you are a disabled person. There is much evidence to say that it is becoming more common for disabled people to face hate crime – this is not acceptable. GMCDP believes that disability hate crime is not being taken seriously enough by the police and the justice system. Therefore, the Mayoral Office and relevant others should:-

* Get DPOs to train police officers and judges to know what disability hate crime is, and how to report it.
* Support DPOs to become a place where people can report a disability hate crime with advocacy services are available for disabled people.
* Make sure the government treats disability hate crime as seriously as all other hate crime.

**7 Conclusion**

This manifesto is intended as a starting point. Disability is so much more than health and social care, which is why we have based this manifesto on the seven needs of independent living (outlined below).

We suggest that the Mayor set up a group of Disabled People’s Organisations, in order to help carry out the work suggested in this manifesto.

GMCDP thinks that devolution in Greater Manchester is a good opportunity to improve things for disabled people. We would like to work with the Mayor and other Disabled People’s Organisations to make these improvements happen.

Joe Whittaker

GMCDP Chairperson