



Disability Action Alliance – Plain English Guide

Important notes

Green writing

In this document we sometimes explain what words mean. The first time we use any of these words, it is in **bold green** writing. Then we write what the words mean in a blue box. If any of the words are used later in the booklet, we show them in **normal green** writing.

For example:

Discussion

This is when people talk to each other, say what they think and listen to what other people think.

About Us

Alliance Mission Statement

The Disability Action Alliance is a large group of organisations from the **public**, **private** and **third sector** who work together to make the lives of disabled people better.

Public Sector – These are groups that are run by the government. This includes most schools, most hospitals and local councils.

Private Sector – These are businesses and groups that are run by people or groups. They make money from their work. The government does not run them.

Third Sector (or voluntary sector) – These are groups outside government. They use the money they make to help the people or things they care most about. Examples are voluntary groups, charities, co-operatives and housing associations.

What does the Disability Action Alliance do?

The Alliance:

- Brings together disabled people's groups with groups from the **public**, **private** and **third sector** to work together.
- Works out what needs to be changed and **involves** disabled people to make the changes.
- Makes sure people know about things that work well for disabled people.

Involve or involving – Being involved is not the same as being asked. Being involved means disabled people taking part in planning, not just being asked what they think about work done by other people.

Alliance Values

The Disability Action Alliance will:

- Do work that will make a positive difference to the lives of disabled people.
- Share ideas and experiences with other group members.
- Build on what we already know works.
- Let everyone know about what the Alliance is working on and how this is going.
- Make **communications** clear and **accessible**.
- Make sure that the work that the DAA does thinks about disabled people who are **disadvantaged** or come from **underrepresented groups**.

Communications – This means sharing information with other people. Information can be shared by email, in newsletters, on websites or Twitter, or by speaking to people on the telephone or in a meeting.

Accessible – This means making sure disabled people can use something. For example:

- A building may need a ramp up to its doors and a lift for people who use a wheelchair.
- Making a CD of someone reading a book for people who cannot read print.

Disadvantaged – This means people do not have the same chances to do things well, as some other people. For example.

- People who do not own a computer could be at a disadvantage as they cannot use information on the internet.

Underrepresented groups – This means groups of people who do not often have the chance to share their views with other people. For example:

- A bus company asks a group of people to help them make changes to the bus service. Disabled people use the buses but no disabled people are part of the group. This means disabled people are underrepresented in that group.

Alliance Priorities

The Alliance's aims are:

- To help groups and government to make early changes to improve the lives of disabled people.
- To help disabled people receive the support they need to live their lives the way they want to.
- To share information with **communities**, so people treat disabled people better.

Community or communities – This means the people, schools, shops and companies in the local area. Good communities are places where people join in and do things together to make their area a good place to live.

Membership Agreement

Alliance members will:

- Try to always think of ideas and things that will help the Alliance make the lives of disabled people better.
- Work in an honest way so that the Alliance does its work properly and respectfully.
- Talk to disabled people to come up with ideas and actions.
- Work with other members to do the work and share ideas and experiences.
- Be aware of what other Alliance members think about things and respect their views.

Respect – This means to think about someone's feelings and ideas, and treat them fairly.

What will Alliance members not do?

Alliance members will not:

- Speak for other members, unless the members say it's ok.
- **Campaign** as a group.

Campaign – This means putting your point of view across very strongly, to try to change things.

Offer to Members

Alliance member organisations can:

- Work together with other members. You might work with some organisations you don't know now.
- Take part in the work we do.
- Share news about your work with other members.

Why not join the Alliance? Let's start making the lives of disabled people better. You can find our ['Join us' form here](#).

Who we are

The Disability Action Alliance is a large group of organisations from the **public**, **private** and **third sector** who work together to make the lives of disabled people better.

What we have done so far

- Worked with the Money Advice Service (MAS) to update their “Care and Disability” **website** page.
- **Launched** a ‘Safe Journey Card’ and driver training in Blackpool. The Journey card and training will make travel better for disabled people on buses and trams in Blackpool. People in other areas may copy the journey card and training.
- **Published** an “**Inclusive Communities**” guide **online**. The guide helps local **communities** to **involve** disabled people in decision making that affects their lives.
- Began the **Volunteering** Charter as part of our **Volunteering** project. The Charter will help more organisations support disabled people to **volunteer**.
- Made our **website** easier to understand and use.
- Published the ‘X-Card’ **survey** report and held a **launch** event in October 2015.
- Ran an **online inclusion survey**, and put the results on the **website** during 2015.
- **Published** information for teachers to help them tell children about disabled people.

Website – A page, or group of pages you can find using a computer on the internet.

Launched – Began, or started something for the first time.

Published – To make information available.

For example:

This happens when a book is printed and you can buy it, or when a guide is put on a website for people to use.

Inclusive or Inclusion – To listen to and include as many people as possible.

Online – Information and services that are available using the internet.

Volunteer or volunteering – Someone who asks to do something, or help someone, without wanting to be paid for it.

For example:

A person could offer to work a few hours in a charity shop to help out, but would not get any money for this.

Survey – A way to ask people for their views.

Projects

Our projects fit with the Alliance's aims (listed on page 5).

If you want to take part:

We would like members to work together and take part in our work.

We would like more organisations to join the Alliance.

To join the Alliance please read the “offer to members” on page 7 and then fill out our Join Us form (click on the red words).

Alliance members

If you:

- Want to take part in our work
- Or
- Want to ask us any questions

Please email us at Fulfilling.potential@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Steering Group

The Alliance **Steering Group** has 14-15 members, and is chaired by Liz Sayce (The Alliance Chair). The Steering Group:

- Agrees what the Alliance will work on, and how.
- Help smaller groups plan and do their work.
- Agree how the Alliance can show it is doing well.
- Agree what is on the Alliance **website**.
- Take forward actions which fit with the Alliance's aims. (The aims are mentioned earlier in this document).

The **membership** of the **Steering Group** is looked at each year. In 2016 we will:

- Look at the membership of the Steering Group and may change some of the members.
- Talk about the aims of the Alliance for the future.

Steering Group – This is a small group of people who make plans for the whole Alliance, to make sure it works well.

Chair, Chairman or Chairperson – This is the person who leads a group, or organisation.

For example.

In a meeting the **Chair** will make sure everyone has a turn to speak and that the meeting ends on time.

Membership – This word is what we call members of a group.

For example.

Members of a local social club could also be called the club's membership.

Meeting Notes

Notes of Steering Group meetings are available [here](#). These meetings were held roughly every 6 weeks until October 2015. Now the Steering Group meets 4 times a year.

Secretariat

The **Office for Disability Issues** is the Secretariat. They help the **Steering Group** by:

- Keeping information about Alliance members.
- Sending newsletters and information to members, and talking to them.
- Arranging meetings.
- Helping groups to make progress on projects/make progress on work/reach their goals.
- Getting members to talk to each other.
- Giving ideas for how members can work together.
- Looking after the Alliance's website.
- Sharing information on Twitter.
- Telling people about the Alliance and asking them to join.

Secretariat – This is a group of people who help the Steering Group and Alliance members to work well.

Office for Disability Issues – This is a Government department, and is part of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).