

# Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel Survey of disabled people in the COVID-19 outbreak

This is the easy read version of our report  
Please ask if you want the standard version



**GMCA** GREATER  
MANCHESTER  
COMBINED  
AUTHORITY

## Introduction

### About the Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel



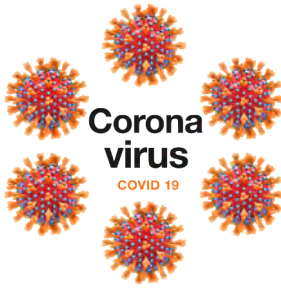
The Panel is made up of 14 different Disabled People's Organisations from all over Greater Manchester. It was set up in 2019 by Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People.



A Disabled People's Organisation is a group that is mostly run by disabled people. Different organisations may have members with different sorts of impairments.



The Panel advises Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Greater Manchester about issues that disabled people think are important.

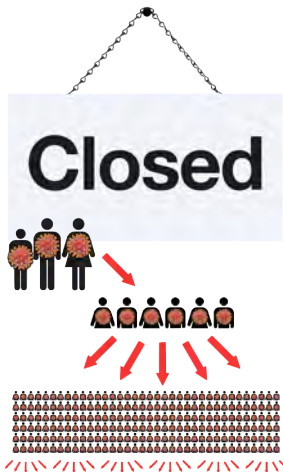


## About the COVID-19 outbreak

All over the world people have been ill because of COVID-19, which is also called the **Coronavirus**. When an illness like this spreads to a lot of places it is called a **pandemic**.



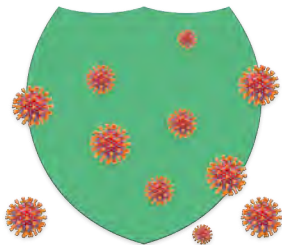
A lot of people have died. To stop even more people catching it, governments have had to make big changes to how people act and what they can do.



In this country, many places such as shops and pubs had to close and people were told to stay at home. This was called **Lockdown**. It was done because someone with COVID-19 can give it to another person near them.

Most people who get COVID-19 get better, but some people can be very ill or even die. It can be worse if people are older, or already have a health condition such as asthma, or have just had a big operation.

These people are called **At Risk** and have to take even more care than others.



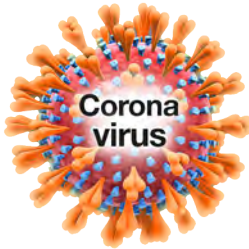
Some people face a **High Risk** of being very ill, the government sent a letter to tell them to be extra careful. Some people were told to **Shield**. This means they have to stay home and cannot even go to the shops to buy food.

Not everyone has someone else who can go shopping for them, such as a family member or neighbour. So **Community Hubs** were set up to help them.



Some disabled people are at risk or at High Risk. But a lot who are not classed this way still have problems doing things they need to do, such as food shopping, or getting medication.

When we were writing this report, some of the rules about what people cannot do were being relaxed. But we know many disabled people still have extra problems.



## What this report is about

Because the Panel know a lot of disabled people, we knew the big impact the COVID-19 outbreak was having on disabled people.

- Disabled people in Greater Manchester were not getting all the support they needed during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- There were problems with the way things were being done.
- This made disabled people worse off than people who were not disabled.



We needed to get some facts about this from all over Greater Manchester, so we could come up with **Recommendations**. These are things that can be done to make things better. We have put our Recommendations at the end of this report.



## How we did it

We did a survey of disabled people in Greater Manchester to find out more.

A survey is where you ask people to answer some questions about a subject and look at everyone's answers and put them together in a report.



To make it more accessible, we did a standard version and an easy read version.



Organisations who are members of the Panel gave them out and helped their members fill it in.



People could get the survey on the website [www.gmconsult.org](http://www.gmconsult.org)

We told people about it on social media and told newspapers and radio.



## Who did the survey

- 936 people did the survey.
- 677 people did the standard version, nearly all said they were disabled.
- 259 did the easy read version, over half of them said they had a learning disability.
- People were from all 10 areas that make up Greater Manchester.



## What we found out

The survey told us that most disabled people were having the same kinds of problems during the COVID-19 outbreak.

- Problems getting food or medication.
- Getting less support from social care.
- Not getting help from Community Hubs, or not even knowing about them.





- Feeling isolated.
- Not getting information they need.
- Not being able to get information or services because they were online. This is called **digital exclusion**.

Nearly everyone said their mental health was made worse by things that are happening because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

### **Shielding and non-shielding disabled people**



The way the government chose who was classed as being High Risk and so needed to Shield caused problems.

Less than one quarter of the people who did the survey had been sent the letter from the government telling them they were High Risk and must Shield.





More than half of the people who had NOT been sent a letter, still had serious health conditions so needed to be extra careful, or still needed support with things such as buying food or getting medication.



But if they did not have the letter, they could not get help from Community Hubs, or others such as delivery slots from supermarkets.

Because of these problems, some people who need to Shield, have been using public transport and going in shops and chemists, which they are not supposed to do.

## **What disabled people think about the government and local councils**

- 3 out of 4 people are not happy with help they get from national government.
- 1 out of 3 think the government is neglecting them.
- 1 out of 3 think local councils are not doing anything that makes a big difference.

## Community Hubs

These are who you contact locally if you need help and support during the COVID-19 outbreak. They bring together all the different sorts of health and social care, and other help that is available.



- 1 out of 3 people did not know anything about the Community Hubs.
- Even if people did know about them, they had problems using them.
- 4 out of 10 people said they were not accessible at all.

People who had a hearing impairment found them the most inaccessible.

People who had a learning disability were the next biggest group to find them inaccessible.

This can be for different reasons.



When Community Hubs were set up, they were telephone based. Some people with disabilities have issues using telephones.



## Conclusion

During the COVID-19 outbreak, disabled people have suffered more of an impact and had more problems put in their way. This puts them at more risk.

The extra problems are not because of the illness, but because of the way support has been organised.

The Panel thinks that even before COVID-19, the way society worked put barriers in the way of disabled people. This stopped them getting fair and equal access to support and services.

It was clear that COVID-19 would make this worse. So, the Panel has not been surprised by what the survey told us.

But because we know about the problems, we can stop them happening again.

We want to help the people in charge do this.



## Recommendations

The Panel thinks these things should be done

### Equality Impact Assessments

All public bodies in Greater Manchester who give services to disabled people, should do Equality Impact Assessments of their COVID-19 response. They should do what the Assessments recommend.



### Digital Exclusion

Digital devices, along with training, support and data costs should be given to disabled people to stop them being excluded.



### Accessible Information

COVID-19 information should be available to every disabled person in a form that is understandable to them. Accessible formats can be easy read, large print, audio, Braille British Sign Language and others.





### **Disabled people involved in planning**

Disabled people and their organisations should be part of all decision making.

### **Isolation, safety and mental health**

There should be more money and resources for mental health support.

### **Support independent living for disabled people**

There should be a long term plan for independent living in the community. This should be a right for disabled people.

### **Personal Assistants and Carers**

Personal Assistants and Carers having to self-isolate caused shortages of staff to support people. To stop this problem:

- Let disabled people hire family or friends.
- Services to have a pool of shared staff.





- Extra funding to people who have to hire cover staff at short notice.
- Let disabled people be allowed to pay for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from their Care Budget.
- Make Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks quicker.



### **Standards, assessments and health care**



- Keep the Care Act 2014 standards.
- Health providers follow revised NICE guidelines about critical care and use 'health passports'.
- Clear information for people with long term health conditions about how to get medical supplies and equipment.
- Information for people worried about going to clinic or hospital appointments.
- Stop Social Care Reviews and assessments until the COVID-19 outbreak is over.





- GPs not to send out Do Not Resuscitate letters. All patients should get treatment when they need it.



- Some people's impairments make it hard to test themselves for COVID-19.

The Track and Trace system has trouble meeting some people's communication and access needs.

### **BAME Disabled People's Organisation**

A Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Disabled People's Organisation should be started in Greater Manchester

#### **Disabled People's Organisation**



### **Disabled People's Organisation**

There should be a Disabled People's Organisation in all 10 areas of Greater Manchester.



In areas where there is not one (Bolton, Bury, Oldham and Trafford) there should be help and resources given to set one up.



## Employment

Government should give employers clear information on reasonable adjustments and making a workplace 'COVID-Safe'. Access to Work needs to be better to meet the needs of disabled workers.



## Education

Greater Manchester should try to have a fully supported inclusive education system.



## Use us

Use the skills, experience and advice of the Panel and Disabled People's Organisations to make things better.

# Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel



**Closed**

**The office is closed  
at the moment due  
to COVID-19**

## Contact details

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