

Statement on the Purpose of the National Forum for Organisations of Disabled People

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report 'Improving Life Chances for Disabled People' set Government the challenge of delivering equality for disabled people by 2025. One of the problems the report describes is that disability groups and individuals are not well represented within policy development and that relations between disabled people's organisations and Government, while improving, have been tentative and partial. A National Forum for Organisations of Disabled People was recommended as part of the solution to these problems.

The Advisory Group is using the working title 'National Forum for Organisations of Disabled People' or 'Forum' until a definitive name has been agreed by the Group and the Government.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE FORUM

2.1 The purpose of the Forum is:

- a. To work with the Government to help it achieve the aim of equality for disabled people by 2025.
- b. To provide advice and information from disabled people based upon the values underpinning the work of the forum and the views and experiences of disabled people.
- c. To advise government departments on how they can engage effectively and meaningfully with disabled people.
- d. To assist Government in raising awareness of disabled people and their rights, improving attitudes towards them and challenging negative stereotypes in the media and the wider community.

e. To help ensure that public bodies are meeting their legal duties under the DDA in relation to the new Disability Equality Duty.

f. To advise Government on the implementation and maintenance of international treaties and conventions.

2.2 The forum will not replace any existing governmental consultation mechanisms nor be used by government instead of consultation with other disability groups.

2.3 The main focus of the forum's work will be the policies and activities of central Government. Issues about other parts of Government and the public or private sectors can be raised and considered, provided this does not conflict with the main focus.

2.4 The forum can comment on and raise issues about all government departments and activities. However, it will prioritise which issues it will consider.

2.5 The forum will engage with disabled people both as individuals and in groups to make sure its views are founded upon as broad a range of views and experiences as possible.

Most importantly,

2.6 In everything that it does, the forum will seek to include and articulate the views, experiences and opinions of the full and diverse range of disabled people, especially the most marginalised, disempowered or excluded groups and those who experience multiple discrimination and those who do not identify themselves as 'disabled'.

2.7 The Forum will work with and talk to other advisory, disability and equalities organisations to ensure that they work towards a common view and that their work complements, supports and strengthens each other.

2.8 It will engage with organisations across the disability sector as well as trade organisations, employers and public sector to strengthen the validity of their work.