

Coalition calls for an inclusive Parliament

3 December

To mark the [United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) (3 December), a coalition of over 30 organisations is calling for the United Kingdom Parliament to be inclusive of signers and people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference.

The theme of this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities is amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future. That makes our call for an inclusive Parliament especially timely because currently signers and people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference can face barriers engaging with Parliament and with the political process more generally.

This can affect parliamentarians, staff on the parliamentary estate and in constituency offices, people seeking elected office, and members of the public trying to engage with their MPs. It can affect the ability of people of all ages to engage with the democratic process, ranging from children and young people, including disabled children and young people, to adults with life-long, or acquired, conditions.

MPs and members of the House of Lords who sign or have communication disability, difficulty, or difference can face added barriers to participation. This is because they do not enjoy the protection of the Equality Act with its requirement to make reasonable adjustments. This is exacerbated by so much of parliamentary business being time-limited and needing to be delivered verbally, including sometimes the use of specific wording.

To help deliver the change we want to see, the inclusive Parliament coalition will be making a submission to the House of Commons' [Modernisation Committee's call for views](#).

We will be setting out what we think needs to happen so that the Commons' standards, culture and working practices, and parliamentary procedures are accessible to and inclusive of signers and people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference.

- We will be asking the Committee to work with us, and with signers and people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference, to make Parliament accessible and inclusive. We will be making immediate, practical recommendations that can be enacted right now, while longer-term action is undertaken.

- We will also be asking the Committee to consider whether current standards, culture and working practices, and parliamentary procedures are compliant with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), specifically Article 29 on participation in political and public life.

We also encourage signers and people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference to make a submission to the Committee themselves highlighting why they think change is needed. The Committee is accepting submissions until 3pm on 16 December 2024.

This statement is supported by the following organisations.

Afasic

Ambitious About Autism

ASLTIP

Auditory Verbal UK

BATOD

British Deaf Association

British Dyslexia Association

Bury People First

CICS (Cochlear Implanted Children's Support Group)

Disabled Children's Partnership

Down's Syndrome Association

Headlines Craniofacial Support

Include.org

Mikey's Wish Foundation

NAPLIC

National Association for Hospital Education

National Deaf Children's Society

NatSIP

NDTi (National Development Team for Inclusion)

Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

SAPHNA

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Special Needs Jungle

Speech and Language UK

Speech Bubbles

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