

Deputation to Council by the 'All Means All' group about the Provision of Changing Places Toilets in Leeds

Who we are

We are Lisa Keenan; Christine Barker; Anthony Benson; Audrey Gallaher and Harvey Hope/Freddy Idle. We are here as representatives of the All Means All group, who are a group of people with high support needs, who came together to look at issues that affect their lives.

What we want

The group identified that not having a changing places toilet stopped them from doing a lot of the things they wanted to. Without these facilities people with high support needs are unable go to the toilet or be changed safely. At the moment there are no changing places facilities in or around Leeds city centre. This means that people with high support needs, and their carers, are excluded from many economic and social benefits and activities enjoyed by the majority of citizens of Leeds.

We want changing places toilets in and around Leeds city centre. A changing places toilet is a toilet that is big enough to accommodate one or two carers, it has a height adjustable changing bench where a carer can safely change their continence pad. There is also a hoisting system so that people can be safely transferred from their wheel chair to the toilet or changing bench. Standard accessible toilets do not have changing benches or hoists and most are too small for more than one person.

We are asking that all new large scale developments include a changing places toilet. We would like to see the provision of Changing Places Toilets in the Local Development Framework of the planning system so that there is an expectation for large scale developments to provide these facilities. It is important that these facilities are provided in public spaces so that people with high support needs can enjoy the same opportunities as other citizens of Leeds. In the short term we

want a confirmed site in the city centre and commitment for the facility to be ready in a year.

Why we want this

- There are 292 adults with high support needs receiving support in Leeds
- There are 425 school children with high support needs.
- Other groups of people would also benefit from these facilities including people with limiting long term illnesses and people with physical impairments.

The need for these facilities isn't specific to Leeds; Mencap has launched a national campaign for changing places toilets and estimates that 40000 people across the country need these facilities. Our neighbours in Bradford now have six changing places toilets and have another three being built.

Consultation and Involvement

This is a user led campaign that was started by a group of people who wanted to make their own lives better. Leeds Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Leeds Voluntary Sector Learning Disabilities Forum and Leeds Advocacy are supporting the All Means All Group with this work. The campaign has many strong supporters including: the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board; the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board Service User Group; Leeds Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Board of Governors; Leeds Voluntary Sector Learning Disabilities Forum's Trustees and their member organisations; and over 1600 individuals who have signed our petition. In support of the campaign the council have set up a working group, led by Adult Social Care, with representatives from City Centre Leeds, City Development, Resources, the Equality team and the All Means All group.

Making it Happen

It is estimated that to make the adaptations for a changing places toilet to an existing space will cost £10000. Several potential sites for these facilities have been identified through the council's working group including the Terrace Bar/café at Leeds Library on the Headrow. The All Means All group is very pleased and encouraged by this work and thinks the locations being explored are good. However, it has not been confirmed that any of these developments will happen and there seem to be many obstacles; including the issue of who will pay for the maintenance and upkeep of these facilities. This provision of these facilities is not just an Adult Social Care issue, we need a whole council approach to show a full commitment to including people with high support needs.

The Valuing People Now cross governmental three year strategy talks about the importance of social inclusion for people with learning disabilities and specifically mentions the importance of the provision of changing places toilets in achieving this. This issue is so important that National Learning Disabilities Week, in June of this year, is focusing on campaigning for more changing places toilets. Leeds City Council's papers: 'Transforming Day Opportunities' and 'Leeds Learning Disabilities Strategy' both stress the importance of moving away from segregated services to more socially inclusive support. Both papers also recognise the role of changing places toilets in achieving this.

Summary

Leeds is a great city with fantastic facilities for its residents and visitors, but the lack of changing places toilets means that people with high support needs are excluded from a lot of what Leeds has to offer. The members of the All Means All group, and people with similar support needs, are citizens of Leeds and a council wide approach is needed to address this exclusion, as well as a definite commitment to getting changing places toilets in Leeds.

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