

**Terms of Reference for Diocesan Disability Forum**

**Name** Diocese of Chester Disability Forum

**Background**

The Disability Forum has existed since 2017. It was established under the direction of the Committee for Social Responsibility.

**Role**

The purpose of the Disability Forum is to promote and enable the full integration of disabled and neurodivergent people into the life of the Diocese of Chester, recognising the significance of this work in the mission of God in the world. The Forum’s work will be underpinned by the principles of inclusivity, collaboration and valuing. They will do this by working in collaboration with the Diocesan Disability Adviser in order to:

raise the awareness of all in the Diocese of Chester to issues of disability, challenging and advocating for disabled and neuruodivergent people at every level

encourage church communities to respond positively to people living with any form of disability or neurodivergence, as well as their carers and families, so that all can play a full part in the worship and mission of God in the parish

encourage every parish in the Diocese to carry out a regular accessibility audit

disseminate information on disability and disability organisations to all parts of the diocese

In order to achieve this, the Forum will provide:

**Scrutiny**: look at policies, strategies, practices and the work of diocesan bodies

**Ideas**: offer workable suggestions for diocesan policies or initiatives which result in

a change in attitude which enables disabled and neurodivergent people to participate fully in every aspect of the life of the church.

**Implementation**: undertaking particular tasks, as requested by the Outreach Committee or Diocesan Synod

**Influence**: further the work of the diocese in parishes, schools and chaplaincies by producing resources, organising events and offering support in other ways.

**Responsibilities**

The Forum will establish priorities regarding any recommendations laid out in the recent vision and strategy process including how their work would make a difference to the 1.5 million by promoting transformative, loving service.

It will look to develop policies and practices that can be adopted, after appropriate consultation and agreement, by parishes and central diocesan bodies.

It will be alert to and respond to further national church initiatives and the experience of other dioceses.

**Accountability**

The Forum is a subcommittee of the Committee for Outreach and should submit a written report twice a year. The Co-chairs or other members may be invited to attend the Outreach Committee and will be invited when matters directly relevant to the work of the Forum are discussed.

The Outreach Committee will respond in a timely way to issues and concerns raised by the Forum.

The Forum will recognise and work in collaboration with other bodies in the diocese, particularly the Mental Health and Racial Justice Forums and the Eco Diocese Group.

**Membership**

The Co-chairs of the Disability Forum are appointed by the Bishop of Chester and will be invited to serve a three year term, which may be renewed. The Co-chairs will be interviewed prior to appointment and references will be taken up, in accordance with Safer Recruitment.

Members will be appointed by the Outreach Committee, in consultation with the Co-chairs of the forum, and will be invited to serve a three year term, which may be renewed. Members will be interviewed prior to appointment and references will be taken up, in accordance with Safer Recruitment.

There should be a maximum of 12 members at any one time. The Co-chairs and Members may serve more than one three year term consecutively.

The Co-chairs and Members of the forum will be given a role description that outlines their role in the work of the forum and the support they can expect in doing this.

It is expected that members will undergo Basic training in safeguarding and that the Co-chairs will undertake Leadership training in safeguarding.

**Meetings**

Meetings of the Forum will take place with a frequency and in a manner and location decided by the Forum.

**Review period**

These terms of reference will be reviewed every three years

**Approval of terms of reference**

Date approved, and by whom