

## **MOTION ON NOTICE**

### **Motion: Inclusive Access Verification for Disabled People at Council-Owned and Council-Supported Venues**

**Proposer:** Cllr Louise Belcher

**Seconders:** Cllr Claire Cozler Cllr Matt Black, Cllr Phil Black, Cllr Joanne Ainscough, Cllr David Whitaker, Cllr Ruth Colbridge, Cllr Sandra Thornberry, Cllr Jackson Stubbs, Cllr Margaret Pattison, Cllr Robert Redfern

#### **This Council notes that:**

- Disabled residents in the Lancaster district have historically been able to access venues, events, and services, including provision for personal assistants or essential carers, by presenting recognised forms of disability verification such as a Blue Badge or evidence of entitlement to Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- Some venues have introduced third-party access accreditation schemes, including the Nimbus Disability Access Card, as a method of verifying access requirements.
- The Council has recently indicated that, within the access policy for The Platform, the Nimbus system will operate as a primary method of verification, while also providing a free venue-specific card option and allowing alternative forms of evidence where individuals do not hold a Nimbus card.
- While access card schemes may offer administrative convenience, any system that effectively requires disabled people to obtain third-party accreditation risks creating financial, administrative, or procedural barriers.
- Many disabled people already undergo extensive statutory assessment processes through the Department for Work and Pensions for Personal Independence Payment or through local authority Blue Badge schemes.
- City Council-owned and Council-supported venues have duties under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments and to ensure policies and practices do not place disabled people at a substantial disadvantage.

#### **This Council believes that:**

- Disabled residents should not be required to undergo additional third-party assessment processes, or incur costs, in order to demonstrate access needs that have already been recognised through statutory systems.
- Access policies should be inclusive, respectful, and focused on enabling participation rather than creating additional hurdles.
- Where access card systems are used, they must operate as optional tools to support access, not as mandatory gateways.
- Disabled people should be able to request reasonable adjustments using a range of accessible and proportionate methods of verification.

#### **This Council therefore resolves to:**

1. Ensure that Council-owned and Council-operated venues do not require disabled people to obtain a Nimbus Access Card or any other third-party access card as a mandatory condition for accessing events, facilities, or personal assistant/essential carer tickets.
2. Confirm that alternative forms of disability verification, including Blue Badges, Personal Independence Payment award documentation, Disability Living Allowance evidence, or confirmation from recognised support services, will be accepted when individuals request reasonable adjustments.

3. Ensure that any access card systems used by Council venues, including those provided by Nimbus Disability, clearly provide a free option and make explicit that holding such a card is not required in order to receive reasonable adjustments.
4. Require that access policies at venues such as The Platform use inclusive and welcoming language, clearly communicating that reasonable adjustments will be made and that multiple routes exist for disabled people to demonstrate access needs.
5. Issue guidance to Council-supported venues, partners, and event organisers encouraging flexible, inclusive verification processes consistent with the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.
6. Undertake a review of access verification policies across Council-owned and Council-supported venues to ensure they remain proportionate, lawful, and do not create unnecessary barriers for disabled residents.

## **OFFICER BRIEFING NOTE**

Chief Officer – Environment & Place

### **Background**

Council-operated venues aim to provide inclusive access for residents and visitors aligned to the councils' corporate priorities. Our venues use third-party systems, such as the Nimbus Disability Access Card, to help identify and communicate access requirements for disabled attendees. These systems are intended to streamline requests for reasonable adjustments, including access for personal assistants or essential carers.

However, concerns have been raised that reliance on a single verification method may unintentionally create barriers for some disabled people, particularly where obtaining a card involves a fee, an application process, or the sharing of personal information.

Local authorities have legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people and to avoid practices that place disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled people.

### **Response to motion**

1. Ensure that Council-owned and Council-operated venues do not require disabled people to obtain a Nimbus Access Card or any other third-party access card as a mandatory condition for accessing events, facilities, or personal assistant/essential carer tickets.

**Council-owned venues will accept other forms of proof to access venues as outlined in the current policy where each individual case will be supported. This has been amended within the policy. However, the Nimbus Access Card, which is a nationally recognised scheme, will remain within the documentation.**

2. Confirm that alternative forms of disability verification, including Blue Badges, Personal Independence Payment award documentation, Disability Living Allowance evidence, or confirmation from recognised support services, will be accepted when individuals request reasonable adjustments.

**Confirmation that alternative forms of disability verification as proposed in point 2 will be accepted.**

3. Ensure that any access card systems used by Council venues, including those provided by Nimbus Disability, clearly provide a free option and make explicit that holding such a card is not required in order to receive reasonable adjustments.

**Confirmation that signposting is within access documentation, highlighting the free access pass and it is explicit that it is not required.**

4. Require that access policies at venues such as The Platform use inclusive and welcoming language, clearly communicating that reasonable adjustments will be made and that multiple routes exist for disabled people to demonstrate access needs.

**Confirmation that following feedback the access policy is being reviewed and language adjusted to ensure the use inclusive and welcoming language. It clearly communicates that reasonable adjustments will be made and that there are multiple routes for people to demonstrate access needs.**

5. Issue guidance to Council-supported venues, partners, and event organisers encouraging flexible, inclusive verification processes consistent with the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.

**Council owned venues will follow the guidance as outlined. For any partner venues of which the council supports the responsibility lies with them as the responsible body. However, we will always ensure that we offer support and guidance where appropriate to supported venues, partners & event organisers, in sharing good practice.**

6. Undertake a review of access verification policies across Council-owned and Council-supported venues to ensure they remain proportionate, lawful, and do not create unnecessary barriers for disabled residents.

**Confirmation that a review has been completed in response to feedback from resident and the author of the motion. This will be reviewed at appropriate intervals.**

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that the Council will be acting in accordance with its Equality Act duties as outlined in the note