

RSN Greater London July Notes

Overview

I apologise for the prolonged silence, I was very busy in June and then out of the UK till almost mid-July, so catching up on things.

At the July monthly meeting, I had some technical difficulties getting the Zoom meeting started and quite a few people sent apologies.

There is never an issue with not being able to join monthly meetings, we always hope to see you when possible and will share updates here and by email/WhatsApp to keep you updated.

I am trying different digital tools to allow for more ways to input or respond. You can share your comments and feedback via comments here in:

A wiki to share docs and pages for comments. More coming with a link.

EtherPad (our collaborative doc tool to gather views for various issues to Government - https://rsn-pad.pikapod.net/p/RSN_Greater_London_Pad)

Email (chair@rsngreaterlondon.org.uk)

WhatsApp group (joining link, but not obligatory - https://chat.whatsapp.com/HZSjpReBjCDFb5qdSS6ppr?mode=gi_t)

The Disabled Londoner (<https://thedisabledlondoner.org.uk>), via comments to posts

Any publicly accessible updates and general disability news have been published here:

<https://thedisabledlondoner.org.uk>

Latest

Following Andy Burnham's appointment as PM, in the restructure, the Disability Unit has moved with Equalities and Opportunities, from Cabinet Office to the [Ministry of Housing, Communities and](#)

[Local Government](#). Minister Stephen Timms remains as key minister for disabled people.

I'll chase on more updated from the DU, as I haven't heard from them in a while, but we are having our monthly meeting of the DU and RSN Chairs this Wednesday, the 29th, so I can share more after that.

Updates sent from the Disability Unit

Minutes from the last monthly Disability Unit and RSN Chairs Meeting on 1st July (attended by Kush as Deputy as I was away).

Key points/actions to note:

- Disability Confident scheme survey closes at 11:59pm on 17 July.

- **Next DU-RSN Chairs monthly meeting** 29 July 1.30-3pm (August meeting cancelled), where DU hope to bring Zara Todd to meet with the Chairs to update on the work of the independent Disability Advisory Panel.
 - RSN Chairs to send DU *their* **top** 3 RSN priority themes by region by *1 September*.
 - The next theme is **Access to Work (*July to October*)**. Initial thoughts to be discussed at the DU-RSN Chair meeting on 23 September ahead of a high level 4 minute verbal summary per region at the Minister Timms-RSN Chair meeting in October (date TBC). Detailed written feedback be sent to DU to collate for DWP by 25 September. The RSN can cover what they would like on the theme, however DWP have listed what it would be useful for the RSN to consider providing feedback on (see the minutes for details).
 - The following theme is then the **Plan for Disability**, which we expect to run in autumn 2026 (exact timings on this are to be confirmed).
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Equal Pay and Pay Discrimination

The Office for Equality and Opportunity (OEO), within the Cabinet Office, have today launched a [consultation on Equal Pay and Pay Discrimination](#).

The UK government is seeking evidence and views on how we can deliver a comprehensive ***reform of the current pay discrimination framework*** so that it works better for workers, businesses, and the justice system.

We are seeking views on proposals to fix the areas of the system that are currently falling short. We are also seeking views on how we can address gaps and inconsistencies in the framework currently affecting disabled people, those from ethnic minority groups, and outsourced workers. The responses from this consultation will help us to ensure that we meet our ambition and fulfill our objectives to:

- make pay discrimination less likely to happen in the first place
- provide effective legal protections against pay discrimination for women, ethnic minority people, disabled people and outsourced workers
- where a dispute about pay discrimination does arise, make it easier to resolve, reducing the time and expense involved for

claimants, employers and the justice system

We are committed to collaborating with businesses, civil society, and trade unions to get the balance right with these reforms, ensuring that they fully account for all parties' needs and circumstances. The responses to this consultation will be used to inform our next steps.

As an important stakeholder, we are keen for the RSN to be able to share your views. We would also encourage you to share this information with your wider networks.

Unfortunately we are unable to publish the accessible and alternative formats of the consultation document today. We appreciate the frustration this may cause to you and your members, and will publish these formats on [this page](#) as soon as possible. To ensure alternative formats are available for sufficient time to enable consideration of our proposals, we have extended the consultation to 15 weeks. This consultation closes at **5pm on 27 October 2026**. We will write to you again when the accessible and alternative formats are available.

As you will have seen from my email yesterday, you have been sent an invite for an optional meeting this **Friday 17 July 11-11.20/30am** with my colleagues in the wider OEO to update you on this work. Please bring any questions/comments on the above to this call.

RSN Annual Activity Update

Please find a letter attached from Minister Timms writing to you announcing the publication of the RSN annual activity update, which covers the work of the RSN December 2024 to December 2025.

The DU also want to thank the RSN Chairs and their members for all their hard work. Please can you share the letter and report with your members. Here is the link to the report (also in accessible formats):

www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-unit-regional-stakeholder-network-annual-activity-update and we have also added

a link to it from the main RSN page:

www.gov.uk/government/groups/disability-unit-regional-stakeholder-network#about-the-rsn

Here also are links to comms that we have put out around this today and we would be grateful if you are able to re-share any of these on your own accounts please, as this publication not only showcases the great work of the RSN, but also hopefully encourages new member applications:

LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/rsn-ugcPost-7482451726042689536-Wrc/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_ios&rcm=ACoAADc3WGsBobKteYYtGc6LfdzW5wyk-K68-4o

X: <https://x.com/oeogovuk/status/2076684451422110155?s=20>

Timms Review Update

Please see an **update from the co-chairs** of the Timms Review: Sharon Brennan, Dr Clenton Farquharson CBE and the Minister for Social Security and Disability, Sir Stephen Timms on [The Timms Review - GOV.UK](#). Alternative formats (including BSL, Easy Read and audio) are also available on this page.

This co-chair update contains details of the Review's **Interim Report**, which we are sharing on behalf of the Timms Review steering group. The Interim Report provides a fuller update on the steering group's work to date, and includes a summary of the Call for Evidence findings.

The report is available at [Timms Review of Personal Independence Payment: Interim Report - GOV.UK](#) and alternative formats (including BSL, Easy Read and audio) are also available on this page. The steering group would be very grateful if you could share the Interim Report widely throughout your organisations and networks.

RSN Chairs Meetings and Next Theme

The **new RSN theme** will be **Access to Work**. My colleagues at ***DWP will come to speak to you all about this at the meeting*** of Chairs and the DU on the 29th.

At the meeting DU can also discuss with you on future themes following your queries by email.

We will also have a colleague from the **DU ATech team** *coming to the meeting to update you about their work.*

The next DU and Chairs meeting is 29th July 130pm.

Other Government-related Updates

Employment Gap Report Launch - 13 July 2026

I attended the launch of the **Employment Gap Report Out of Sight - Out of Work.**

This was in their follow up email:

A wide range of valuable perspectives were shared - including great input from yourself, with many useful points raised in the Report. Taken together, the discussion led to a clear and shared conclusion: the government needs to create a Taskforce to act on what is already known - the barriers are clearly defined, we now need to have the courage to create outcomes.

As we went round the table, it was evident that employers need more guidance and support to turn policies into processes; assistive technology skills need to be taught early on to enable; government must create a clear pathway for people from the point of diagnosis to enable them to make use of their talent; and shift culture and attitudes by leading the way in procurement.

We will be following up with you as we move this forward and would greatly value your continued involvement.

In the meantime, please find below a link to the Employment Gap Report Out of Sight – Out of Work as well as to today's LinkedIn post recapping the launch meeting.

Please do share freely on your official LinkedIn channels and to your member newsletters if you can!

Employment Gap Report Out of Sight – Out of Work

<https://lordchrisholmes.com/report-on-the-employment-gap-for-blind-and-partially-sighted-people-in-the-uk-out-of-sight-out-of-work/>

LinkedIn post:

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/lord-chris-holmes_73-of-blind-or-partially-sighted-bps-people-ugcPost-7482450105099382784-wv0x/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAABrYTpAB0dHOa1Y1y1Sv3zefGsN2u9Q3LrM

DWP Roundtable 23rd June on Accessibility and Technology

I attended this remotely while waiting for my flight from Heathrow. Pat McFadden is gathering views on Accessibility and Technology for disabled people.

The next one is in September, where we will put forth ideas on the table.

Equality Objectives London

This is from a series of invitations from the Greater London Assembly:

The GLA is refreshing the Mayor's Equality Objectives, which are due to be published in 2026.

Reducing inequality is a priority for the Mayor and our engagement process will use our shared understanding of the Mayors' powers to build upon four key themes. The engagement will include identifying shared priorities and common themes across the objectives to tackle both structural and systemic drivers of inequality.

The first session will focus on theme 1:

Healthy and inclusive communities in London that have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

(e.g. reducing mental and physical health inequalities, support digital inclusion, invest in high street regeneration)

RSN Greater London

We've had two new applications to join our network. I am booking chats with both to learn more.

I met with a group in Parliament who were campaigning against the 'floating' bus stops in cities like London. They would be keen on our support in raising more awareness of this. National Federation of the Blind of the UK <https://www.nfbuk.org/>

As mentioned above, the theme for the next Ministerial meeting is on Access to Work, and hearing your views on this to bring to the meeting. I hope to hear more on dates in the Disability Unit and RSN Chairs meeting this Wednesday the 29th, but just wanted to give you all a heads-up

We also should review those issues of concern to ourselves and how we can go about collecting useful info and identify routes to bring this to the attention of relevant people via the Disability Unit.

Our issues covered adult social care, unpaid carers, life-long lack of independence and capacity, the mental health act and its impact on practices of institutional care.

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