

# Findings of the National Local Authority Survey on Accessibility

February 2020

## Executive summary

- 1 The purpose of the National Local Authority Survey on Accessibility (the Survey) was to:
  - understand how well local authority policies and practices are meeting the accessibility needs of disabled people (including disabled residents, children and visitors)
  - provide a snapshot of the progress being made nationally by local authorities and any innovations they are testing.
- 2 The Survey was triggered by disabled people reporting that local government has a greater impact on their daily lives than central government.
- 3 The Survey was developed by the Office for Disability Issues and was conducted from 18 November to 6 December 2019.
- 4 Twenty-three out of 78 local authorities responded (one regional council, seven city councils, and 14 district councils; one council chose to remain anonymous).
- 5 The Survey covered seven key areas of interest: leadership; participation; data collection and planning; access to information and services; transport; built and public spaces; and resilience and inclusive communities.<sup>1</sup>
- 6 The key findings include:
  - **Leadership**
    - Just over 30 percent of councils responded that “disabled people are ‘at the table’ when significant decisions are made”. In addition, 13 percent reported that, in relation to accessibility, “disabled people are employed in areas of leadership”.
    - Our conclusion is that more needs to be done to employ disabled people in local government positions in order to take a lead on accessibility.
  - **Participation**
    - Thirty-nine percent of councils rated the accessibility of their processes for disabled people’s participation in the community as “developing”.
    - When asked how they include the voices of disabled people in election processes, policy development and implementation, almost 40 percent reported that they do not have any form of accessibility or older people’s advisory group.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for an overview of the Survey questions in relation to these areas.

- Our conclusion is that more can be done to progress disabled people’s participation in policy development and implementation at the local level.
- **Data collection**
  - Reporting on incidences of non-accessibility and resolution outcomes is the most common method of collecting accessibility data (74 percent). This suggests that councils may only collect such data following an incident.
  - Our conclusion is that the councils are not proactively collecting accessibility information on a wide range of issues.
- **Planning**
  - Seventy-eight percent and 40 percent listed the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 and the Accessibility Charter respectively as informing their thinking on accessibility planning. While it is encouraging that the Disability Strategy is prevalent in the surveyed councils’ thinking on accessibility, it would be beneficial to increase the profile of the Accessibility Charter.
  - The majority of councils use informal networks (91 percent) and in-house experience and expertise (74 percent) to support accessibility work.
  - The most frequent barriers identified by respondents as impeding progress on improving accessibility for disabled people relate to cost (eg retrofitting existing infrastructure) and resourcing (eg budget).
  - When asked what would best assist them in progressing work around accessibility in their regions, the most frequent response was clear guidance from both central government and their own councils, and a core staff within councils dedicated to disability issues.
- **Access to information and services**
  - Two-thirds of councils are enabling disabled people to access information and services through the training of frontline staff.
  - Our conclusion is that other processes will also need to be put in place to improve access to information and services.
- **Transport**
  - Seventy-four percent of councils rate their regional transport as less than “good” for accessibility.
  - When asked to comment on how they support the provision of accessible transport options, the most common answer was accessible parking.
- **Built and public spaces**
  - Although respondents rate the accessibility of built spaces (74 percent gave a rating of “adequate” or “good”) and public spaces slightly better than the accessibility of transport networks, the conclusion is that much more work is required to meet disabled people’s needs in communities across New Zealand.
- **Resilience and inclusive communities**
  - The ratings of resilience for local communities were mixed, being evenly distributed between “developing”, “adequate”, “good” and “strong”.
  - Although many councils are supporting a focus on inclusive communities, it is not clear whether this incorporates a focus on disabled people.
  - Some councils have a focus on disabled residents in emergency management planning.

- Respondents listed various ways of providing “safe” community places or approaches for reporting incidents (eg hate crime) such as community-wide education workshops and councils working in collaboration with local emergency services.
- **Policy and practice documents**
  - Councils were able to submit additional documentation to support their answers. Thirteen councils submitted 34 documents, which showed that a substantial amount of work is required to develop robust policies and practices that will make a positive difference in the daily lives of disabled people in communities across New Zealand.

## Background

### Survey development and design

*The Survey was triggered by disabled people reporting that local government has a greater impact on their daily lives than central government.*

- 7 The impact of local government on disabled people's lives has been raised in meetings with you on several occasions. Issues relating to local government were also raised during consultation on the development of the Disability Action Plan 2019-2023.
- 8 Given the greater impact of local government on disabled people's lives, the Office for Disability Issues initiated this Survey to elicit feedback on how well local authority policies and practices are working for disabled people, including disabled residents, children and visitors.
- 9 A key objective of the Survey was to stimulate local authorities to accelerate progress towards improving accessibility in local communities across New Zealand and allow councils to submit accessibility policies and practices that are working well (paragraph 15 refers), potentially for the Office for Disability Issues to share with others.
- 10 The Office for Disability Issues consulted with the Ministry of Social Development, Local Government New Zealand, the Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Disabled People's Organisations Coalition in the process of designing the survey.
- 11 The Survey covered seven key areas: leadership; participation; data collection and planning; access to information and services; transport; built and public spaces; and resilience and inclusive communities.
- 12 A six-point Likert scale was employed for most of the questions included in the Survey, using the following sequence: 1 – Poor, 2 – Developing, 3 – Adequate, 4 – Good, 5 – Strong and 6 – Outstanding. This unusual scale of six was selected to minimise the risk of moderate and neutral responses in the middle, given that such responses do not offer useful information and provide more reliable results. Research indicates that a six-point scale compels choice and provides more robust data.<sup>2</sup>
- 13 The Survey also invited respondents to provide examples of planning, policy and practice documents focused on meeting the accessibility needs of disabled people in local communities.

#### *Definition of accessibility*

- 14 Accessibility is generally understood as our ability to engage with, participate in, and belong to, the world around us.
- 15 Accessibility for disabled people includes:
  - access to warm, safe and affordable housing
  - access to choices about where to live, learn, work and play
  - access to safe and affordable transport
  - access to public buildings, spaces and facilities

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.quantumworkplace.com/future-of-work/the-case-for-the-six-point-likert-scale>

- access to information in formats and languages that meet disabled people's needs
- access to meaningful work and play
- access to leadership positions on an equal basis with non-disabled people.

*The Survey was designed to elicit local officials' perspectives on accessibility*

16 There may be some criticism that the voices of disabled people were not sought in the Survey. This Survey is a starting point to collect the views of local authority officials on how well accessibility policies and practices are working for disabled people in their local communities. A possible future step is to collect the views of disabled people themselves. This would be best implemented by local authorities.

### **Survey response rate and key findings**

*The response rate was moderate*

17 The survey questionnaire was sent to the 78 local authorities across New Zealand. Twenty-three local authorities returned the questionnaire, that is, a response rate of 29.5%.<sup>3</sup>

18 It is reasonable to assume that the respondents were local authorities that had an interest in disability issues. The response rate may have been influenced by the following:

- The survey was conducted several weeks after the October 2019 local body elections, and about a third of the elected members were new to their roles.
- The survey was open for three weeks (18 November 2019 to 6 December 2019). This was a busy time of the year for many local authorities. Those authorities with a higher workload and less available staff may have been less likely to respond to the survey.
- The survey was directed to the Chief Executives of all local authorities. The Chief Executives were encouraged to include the views of their elected officials and the local disability communities. However, many Chief Executives did not include these wider views.
- Local authorities that are more aware of and/or more interested in meeting the accessibility needs of their communities may have been more likely to respond to the survey.
- Local authorities with a dedicated disability staff may have been more likely to respond to the survey.

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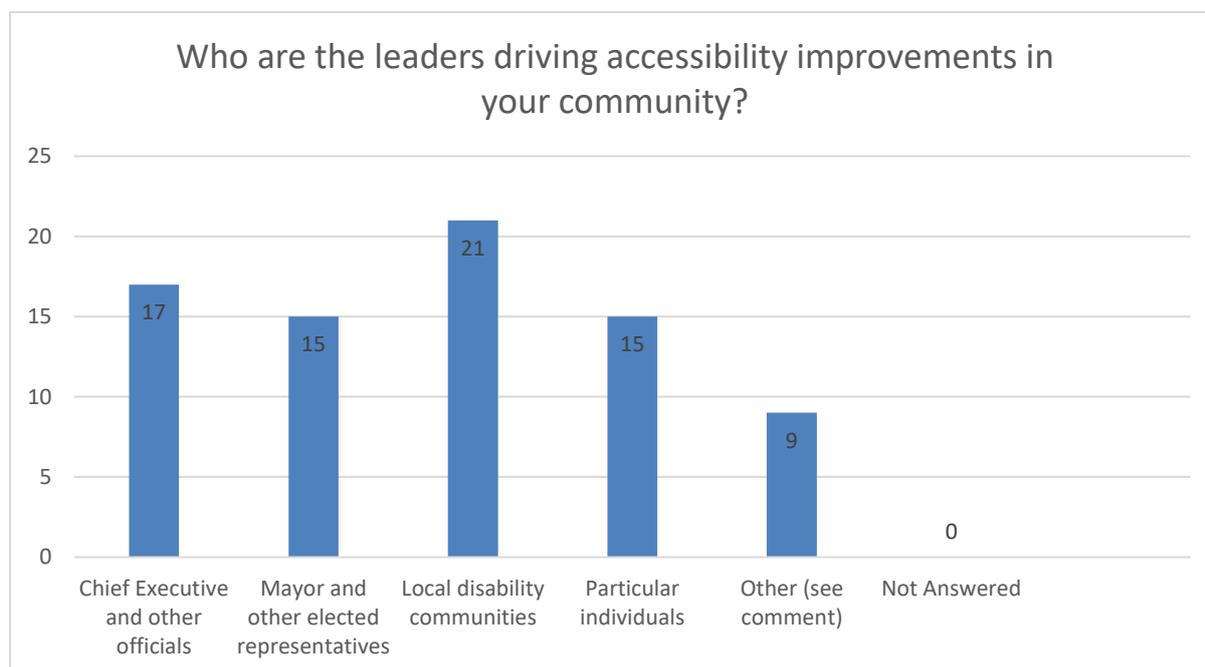
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lqz.co.nz/nzs-local-government/new-zealands-councils/>. The terms, local authority and council, have been used interchangeably in the report. There are 78 local authorities in New Zealand (53 district councils, 13 city councils, and 12 regional councils).

## Key findings – additional detail

### Leadership

- 19 Councils provided a mixed response when asked how strongly they were advocating for accessibility. Answers were evenly spread between “developing” and “strong”, with many local authorities acknowledging that they are not currently prioritising this area.
- 20 “Local disability communities” were identified by local authorities (91 percent) as the principal leaders driving accessibility improvements in their communities, followed by “Chief Executives and other officials” (74 percent). Smaller numbers of respondents selected “mayor and other elected representatives”.

Option	Total	Percent
Chief Executive and other officials	17	73.91%
Mayor and other elected representatives	15	65.22%
Local disability communities	21	91.30%
Particular individuals	15	65.22%
Other (see comment)	9	39.13%
Not Answered	0	0%



*Graph 1: Leaders driving accessibility improvements in communities*

- 21 Other groups mentioned by the respondents that are enabling accessibility improvements were: the NZTA Consultation Group for Transport Accessibility, particular teams within councils, and support from other councils.
- 22 When asked how their local authority was showing leadership and influence in promoting a culture which prioritises accessibility, the most frequent answer selected was “disabled people are engaged to provide necessary advice”. Just over 30 percent of local authorities responded that “disabled people are ‘at the table’”

when significant decisions are made". Thirteen percent stated that "disabled people are employed in areas of leadership".

Option	Total	Percent
Accessibility is considered in all areas of governance.	7	30.43%
Disabled people are engaged to provide necessary advice.	15	65.22%
Disabled people are employed in areas of leadership.	3	13.04%
Disabled people are 'at the table' when significant decisions are made.	7	30.43%
Other (see comment)	8	34.78%
Not Answered	1	4.35%



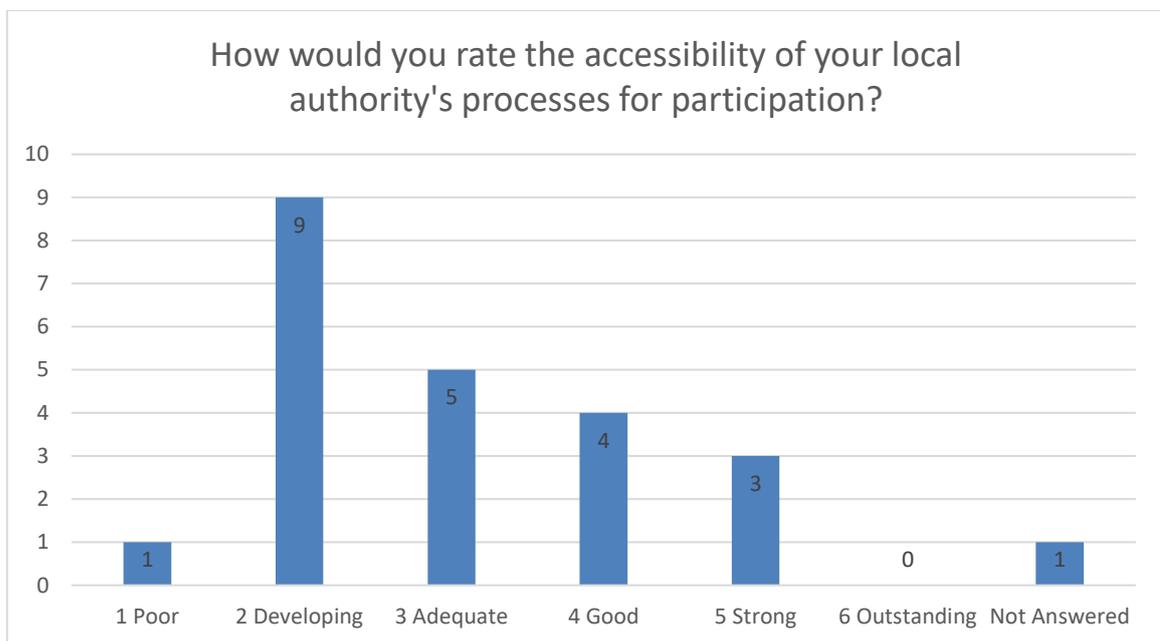
*Graph 2: Local authorities showing leadership and influence in promoting a culture of accessibility*

- 23 These selected responses point to local authorities being more likely to consult or include disabled people on specific accessibility projects, rather than employing them on a permanent basis to lead on accessibility in all local authority areas of work.

### *Participation*

- 24 The survey results showed that most councils (39 percent) rate the accessibility of their processes for participation as "developing". A further 22 percent responded with "adequate", and 30 percent responded with "good" or "strong".

Option	Total	Percent
<b>1 Poor</b>	1	4.35%
<b>2 Developing</b>	9	39.13%
<b>3 Adequate</b>	5	21.74%
<b>4 Good</b>	4	17.39%
<b>5 Strong</b>	3	13.04%
<b>6 Outstanding</b>	0	0%
<b>Not Answered</b>	1	4.35%



*Graph 3: Accessibility of local authorities' processes for participation*

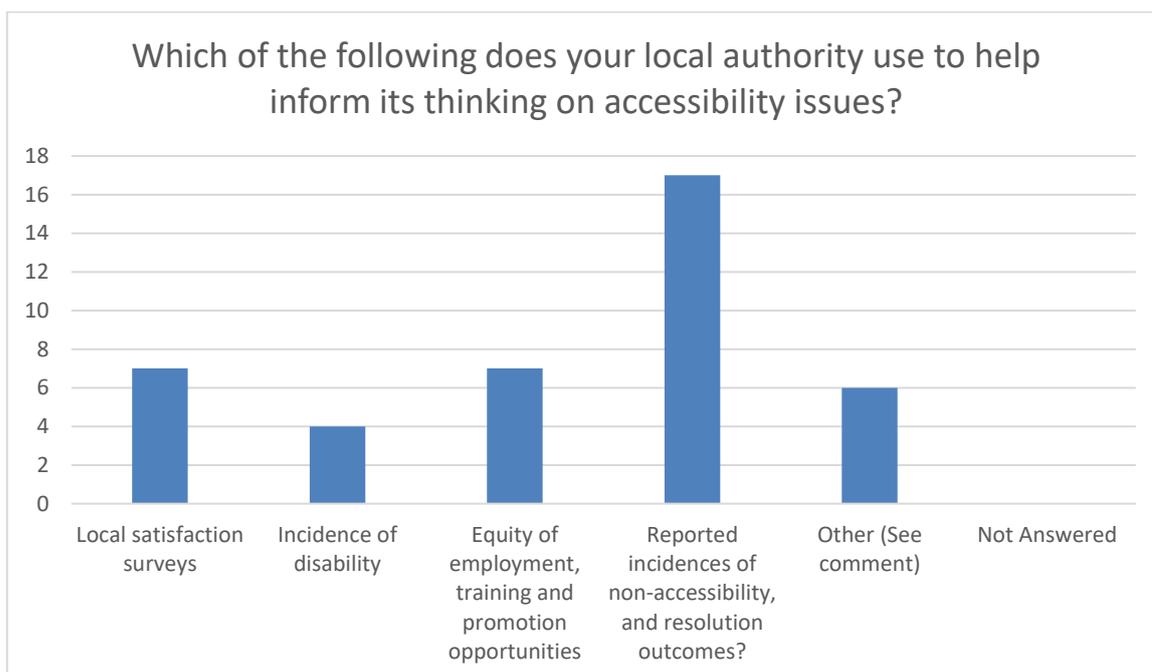
- 25 These results suggest that there is much room for improvement in the processes for disabled people's participation at the local community level.
- 26 When asked how they include the voices of disabled people in election processes, policy development and implementation, the most common response selected (43 percent of respondents) was "our local authority has an accessibility advisory group which meets regularly. The members represent specific sector groups".
- 27 Almost 40 percent of respondents made it known that their local authority does not have any form of accessibility or older people's advisory group for the inclusion of the voices of disabled people. This finding indicates that many local authorities surveyed may not fully appreciate the importance of including the voices of disabled people in their election processes, policy development and implementation. A number of these local authorities, however, submitted specific comments that they would be willing to support the formation of an accessibility or older people's advisory group, if it was recommended or should the need arise.
- 28 When asked about what other civic participation supports they provide for disabled people, the most common responses included:
- producing key documents in a range of accessible formats

- providing New Zealand Sign Language interpreters at key community meetings
  - initiating partnerships and funding agreements with local agencies and organisations that support accessibility issues
  - providing ongoing maintenance of current assets and infrastructure as well as the construction of new assets and infrastructure to align with accessibility recommendations
  - supporting elected members to frequently attend older people’s community group meetings (eg Grey Power) to identify any issues that may arise.
- 29 The availability of these additional civic participation supports demonstrates the efforts of some of the local authorities surveyed to make community events more accessible for disabled people. However, other surveyed local authorities commented that they do not currently have any formal processes for civic participation supports. This situation points to a level of inconsistency between local authorities.

*Data collection*

- 30 As to how well local authorities use data on accessibility, the majority of respondents stated “developing” or “adequate”. None answered “strong” or “outstanding”. It is reasonable to infer that there is room for improvement in the use of accessibility data across local authorities in New Zealand.
- 31 Regarding what information local authorities collect on accessibility, 74 percent of respondents selected “reported incidences of non-accessibility, and resolution outcomes”. In addition, around a quarter of the surveyed local authorities answered that they collect accessibility information through: “local satisfaction surveys”, “incidence of disability”, and “equity of employment, training and promotion opportunities”.

Option	Total	Percent
<b>Our local authority has an accessibility advisory group which meets regularly. The members represent specific sector groups.</b>	10	43.48%
<b>Our local authority has an accessibility advisory group which meets regularly. The members are selected through an open application process.</b>	8	34.78%
<b>Our local authority has an older persons’ advisory group which meets regularly. The members represent specific sector groups.</b>	8	34.78%
<b>Our local authority has an older persons’ advisory group which meets regularly. The members are selected through an open application process.</b>	6	26.09%
<b>Our local authority has no accessibility or older persons’ advisory group.</b>	9	39.13%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0%



*Graph 4: Information collected by local authorities on accessibility*

- 33 The surveyed local authorities also submitted other sources of accessibility data, including:
- disability advisory panels
  - informal satisfaction data and surveys
  - service requests from public access groups
  - community meetings with medical services and health advisory groups
  - Statistics New Zealand
  - age-friendly research and seniors' surveys.
- 34 Given that reporting incidences of non-accessibility and resolution outcomes is the most common method of collecting data on accessibility, suggests that the majority of the surveyed local authorities may be collecting such data only once it is given to them following an incident. It is reasonable to infer that the surveyed local authorities are not proactively collecting accessibility information on a wide range of issues.

### *Planning*

- 35 When asked to report on what helps to inform their thinking on accessibility issues, the most commonly selected answer was the New Zealand Disability Strategy (78 percent) followed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (61 percent). Almost 40 percent listed the Accessibility Charter. It would be beneficial to increase the profile of the Charter among local authorities across New Zealand.
- 36 When asked about priorities and timeframes to progress accessibility, the most frequent answer provided by the surveyed local authorities was that they do not have specific or directed priorities for progress.
- 37 Although a substantial number of the local authorities surveyed do not currently have any priorities for progressing accessibility, a fair number of them acknowledged that there is more to be done. They stated their intent to introduce a

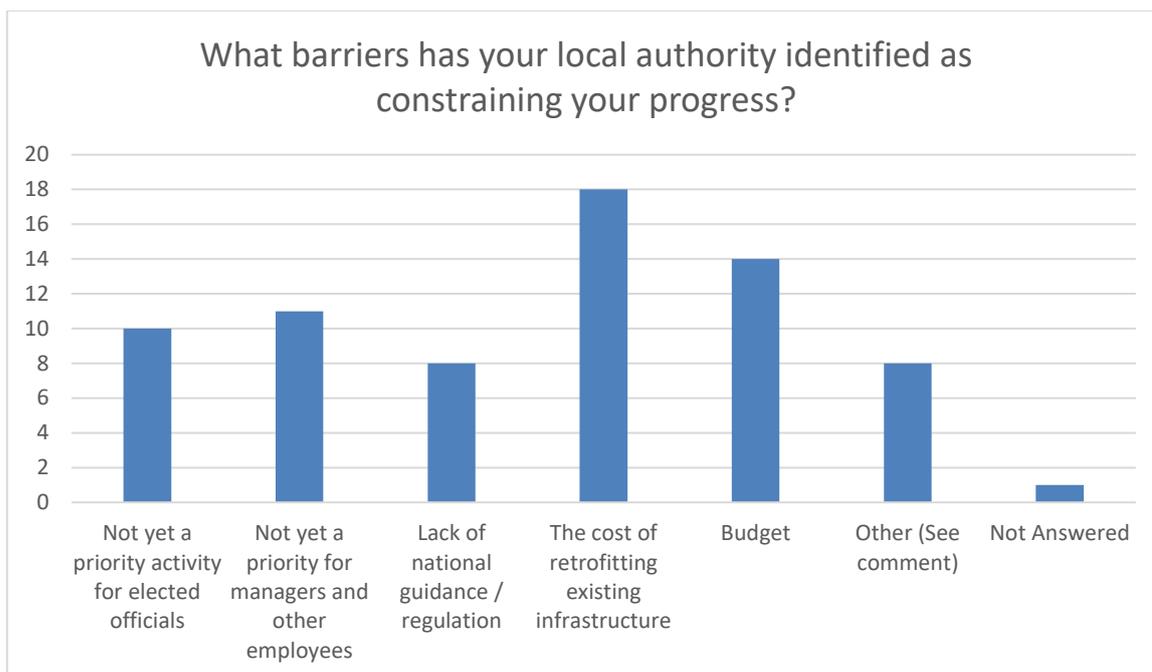
regional accessibility strategy in the future. It is encouraging that local authorities are at least open to progressing accessibility in their regions.

- 38 The most common answer to the question about what other organisations the surveyed local authorities use to benchmark their progress on accessibility, was “none”.
- 39 As to the policies and other resources used to support accessibility, the majority of respondents (91 percent) selected “informal networks, such as for disability or older people”. In addition, a substantial number (74 percent) stated that they use “in-house experience and expertise”, and around 40 percent reported using an overarching accessibility policy and/or annual planning and reporting.
- 40 Various barriers were selected by the surveyed local authorities as constraining progress on improving accessibility for disabled people in their regions.<sup>4</sup> These included in order of priority:
- “the cost of retrofitting existing infrastructure” (78 percent of respondents)
  - “budget” (61 percent of respondents)
  - “not yet a priority for managers and other employees” (45 percent)
  - “not yet a priority activity for elected officials” (45 percent).

<b>Option</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Not yet a priority activity for elected officials</b>	10	43.48%
<b>Not yet a priority for managers and other employees</b>	11	47.83%
<b>Lack of national guidance / regulation</b>	8	34.78%
<b>The cost of retrofitting existing infrastructure</b>	18	78.26%
<b>Budget</b>	14	60.87%
<b>Other (See comment)</b>	8	34.78%
<b>Not Answered</b>	1	4.35%

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<sup>4</sup> The Public Finance Act requires local authorities to operate within budget and report on their spending. Annual planning sets the priorities for local authorities’ work programmes. It may be difficult for many local authorities to allocate funding or gain additional funding to improve accessibility in their local communities.



*Graph 5: Barriers identified by local authorities constraining progress on accessibility*

41 About one-third of respondents also mentioned “lack of national guidance/regulation” as a barrier. Other barriers identified by the surveyed local authorities as constraining their progress on accessibility included:

- staff capacity and turnover
- resource allocation
- competing priorities
- lack of knowledge and understanding of information about accessibility and disability issues within the local authority.

42 Many of the barriers identified as impeding progress on improving accessibility relate to financial and resourcing issues and a lack of understanding about the value of accessibility.

43 As a follow up to identifying barriers, the surveyed local authorities submitted answers on what would best assist them in progressing work around accessibility in their regions. A common theme running through the responses was clear guidance from both central government and their own councils, and a core staff within councils dedicated to disability issues.

### *Access to information and services*

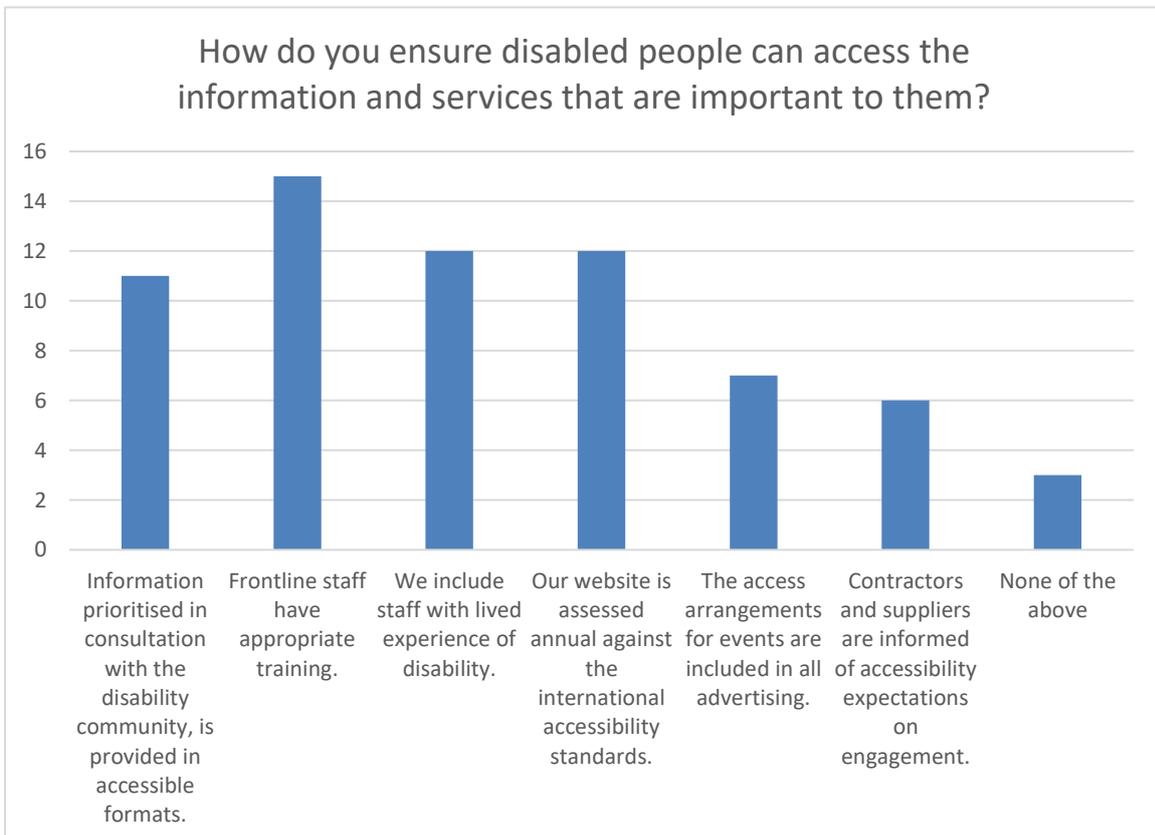
44 When the local authorities were asked how accessible they considered their information and services for disabled people, there was an even split of respondents answering either “developing”, “adequate”, or “good”.

45 In response to the next survey question relating to how to ensure disabled people can access the information and services important to them, the most common answer selected (65 percent of respondents) was “frontline staff have appropriate training”. Other popular answers (all selected by around 50 percent of respondents) included:

- “information prioritised in consultation with the disability community, is provided in accessible formats”

- “we include staff with lived experience of disability”  
“our website is assessed annually against the international accessibility standards”.

Option	Total	Percent
<b>Information prioritised in consultation with the disability community, is provided in accessible formats.</b>	11	47.83%
<b>Frontline staff have appropriate training.</b>	15	65.22%
<b>We include staff with lived experience of disability.</b>	12	52.17%
<b>Our website is assessed annual against the international accessibility standards.</b>	12	52.17%
<b>The access arrangements for events are included in all advertising.</b>	7	30.43%
<b>Contractors and suppliers are informed of accessibility expectations on engagement.</b>	6	26.09%
<b>None of the above</b>	3	13.04%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0%



Graph 6: Accessibility of information and services for disabled people

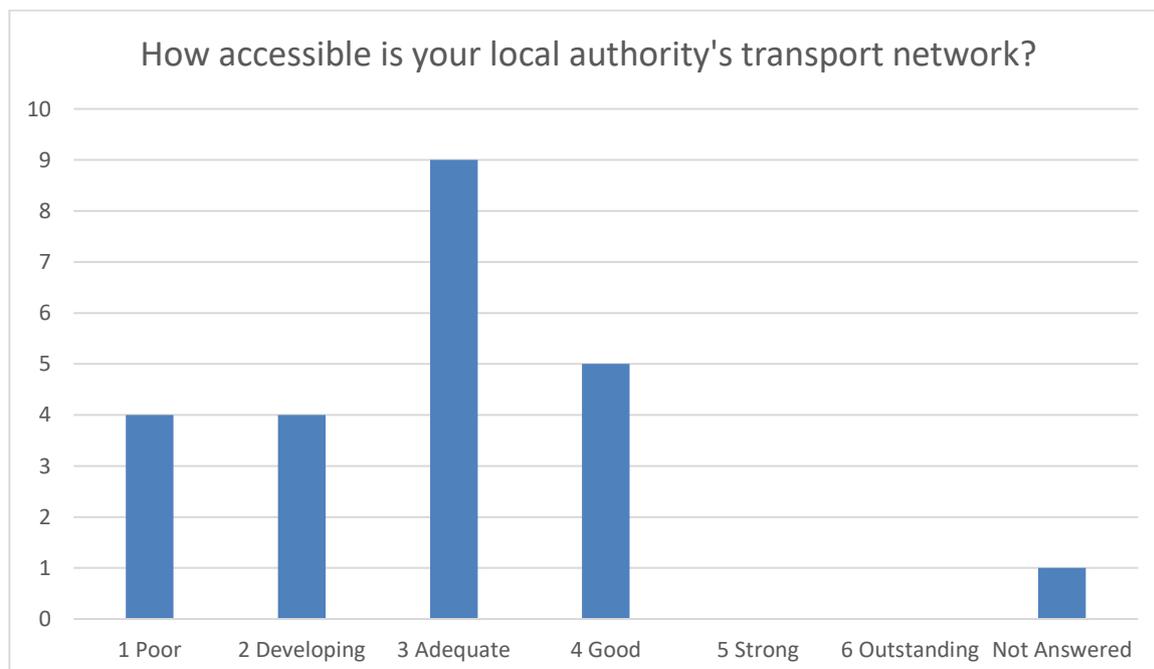
46 These responses indicate that while over two-thirds of the surveyed local authorities are enabling disabled people to access information and services through the training of frontline staff, other processes also need to be put in place to improve the accessibility of information and services in local communities across New Zealand.

*Transport*

47 When it came to local authorities rating the accessibility of their transport networks, the majority of respondents (39 percent) selected “adequate”. Thirty-five percent selected “developing” or “poor”, while 21 percent selected “good”. Given that accessible transport is fundamental for disabled people to go about their daily lives in their communities, the 74 percent of the surveyed local authorities rating their regional transport as less than good for accessibility is concerning. It is crucial to improve accessible transport outcomes at a local level.

Option	Total	Percent
<b>1 Poor</b>	4	17.39%
<b>2 Developing</b>	4	17.39%
<b>3 Adequate</b>	9	39.13%
<b>4 Good</b>	5	21.74%
<b>5 Strong</b>	0	0%
<b>6 Outstanding</b>	0	0%
<b>Not Answered</b>	1	4.35%

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Graph 7: Accessibility of transport networks in local authorities

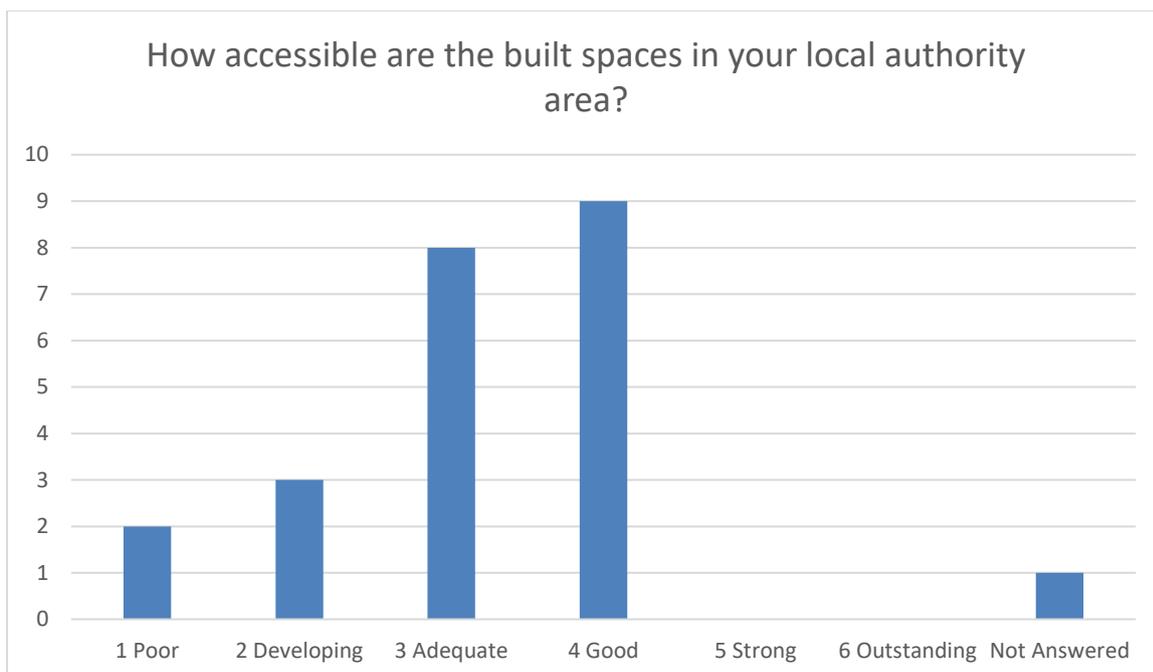
- 49 To gain more information about accessible transport, local authorities were asked to comment on how they support the provision of accessible transport options, including parking. The most common answer was that accessible parking is widely available in their local area. Other submitted comments included:
- their council has a mobility parking resource
  - local buses are wheelchair accessible
  - the council provides transport information on their website, and uses social media to alert customers of any disruptions to the transport network
  - regional council provides door-to-door mobility services
  - roading renewal works and improvement projects are being designed to incorporate principles set out in New Zealand Standard 4121 Design for Access and Mobility, as well as guidelines for blind and vision impaired pedestrians.
- 50 This provision of accessible transport options at the local level is a good starting point. However, there remains a lack of consistency between the surveyed local authorities in their support of accessible transport options.

### *Built and public spaces*

- 51 When asked how accessible the built spaces are in their local authority areas, the majority of respondents (74 percent) answered “adequate” or “good”, while a lesser number (22 percent) said either “poor” or “developing”.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1 Poor</b>	2	8.70%
<b>2 Developing</b>	3	13.04%
<b>3 Adequate</b>	8	34.78%
<b>4 Good</b>	9	39.13%
<b>5 Strong</b>	0	0%
<b>6 Outstanding</b>	0	0%
<b>Not Answered</b>	1	4.35%

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Graph 8: Accessibility of built spaces in local authorities

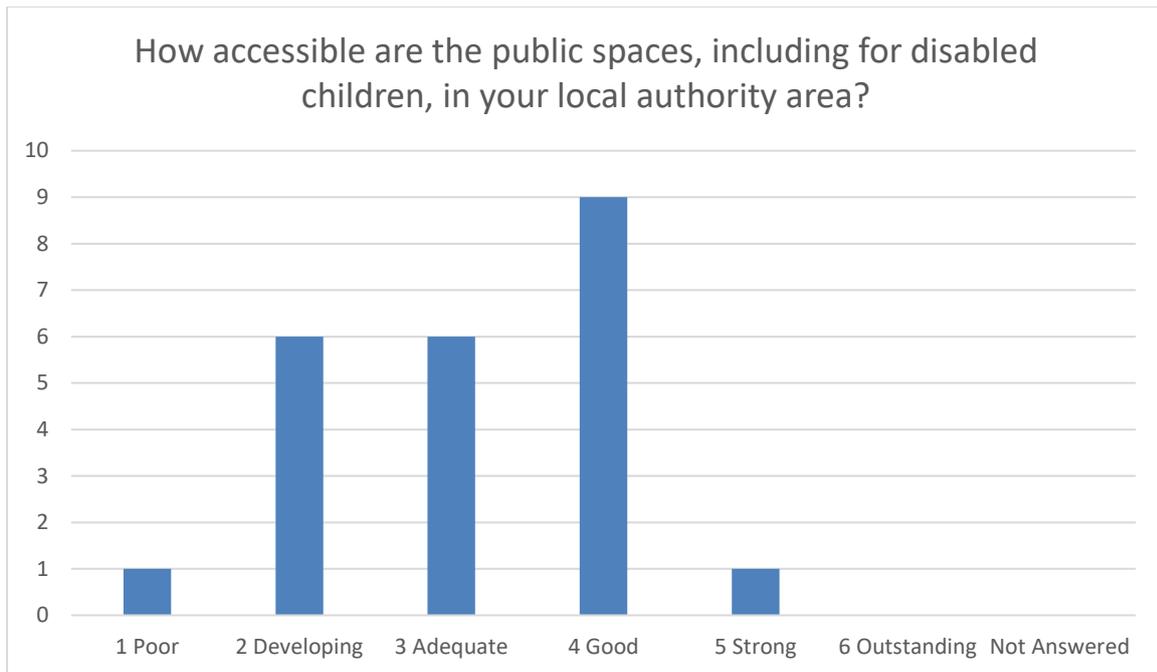
53 Other submitted responses included:

- public toilets are accessible
- the council’s Business and Retail Team works closely with retailers to encourage accessible site and merchandise layouts within their stores
- the council ensures all new buildings (and upgrades to old ones, where possible) meet the appropriate codes and standards for accessibility
- regular audits are performed by an accessibility interest group.

54 These results indicate that although the accessibility of built spaces tends to be slightly better than the accessibility of transport networks in the surveyed communities across New Zealand, much more work is required to meet disabled people’s accessibility needs in the built environment.

55 Similarly, public spaces tended to receive slightly more favourable ratings from the surveyed local authorities. When asked how accessible the public spaces are, including for disabled children, in their local authority areas, the most common response (39 percent) was “good”. A further 52 percent of respondents answered either “adequate” or “developing”.

Option	Total	Percent
<b>1 Poor</b>	1	4.35%
<b>2 Developing</b>	6	26.09%
<b>3 Adequate</b>	6	26.09%
<b>4 Good</b>	9	39.13%
<b>5 Strong</b>	1	4.35%
<b>6 Outstanding</b>	0	0%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0%



*Graph 9: Accessibility of public spaces, including for disabled children, in local authorities*

- 56 Councils were also asked in what other ways disabled people are enabled to participate in activities in their local communities. The responses included:
- community-led programmes and groups, initiatives and activities
  - public consultation
  - city council meetings
  - event planning
  - mobility scooters available to hire for local pathways and parks
  - community assistance through grants and funding for local organisations
  - provision of transport to and from events aimed at older people.

### *Resilience and inclusive communities*

- 57 When asked how resilient they consider their local communities, selected answers were evenly distributed between “developing”, “adequate”, “good” and “strong”. What can be inferred is that ratings of resilience for local communities are mixed.
- 58 In response to the question relating to how local authorities are supporting the development of inclusive communities, the respondents mentioned several activities, including:
- a Social Strategy outlining their goals for more connected communities
  - a Multicultural Council Newcomers Network and migrant support groups
  - regular workshops aimed at providing the community with education about local needs, inclusiveness, diversity and resilience
  - encouragement of diversity in local body representation
  - provision of “quiet hours” in local facilities such as libraries to better include those with sensory needs
  - projects that “link the young and old”.

- 59 The above responses suggest that many local authorities are supporting the development of inclusive communities. It is not clear whether this includes a focus on disabled people in these communities.
- 60 Regarding how local authorities' emergency management planning reflects inclusion, the responses included:
- by following guidelines relating to Civil Defence Emergency Management Planning, which includes considering relevant information, evacuation procedures, welfare and recovery for disabled people
  - by working in partnership with their local/regional Emergency Management Team to support the running of emergency workshops, covering diversity, accessibility and inclusion
  - by working with rest homes to prepare older people with mobility challenges for how to respond in an emergency.
  - by supporting groups which help in emergency situations such as Neighbourhood Support, Age Concern and schools.
- 61 These responses suggest that some respondents have a focus on disabled residents in emergency management planning.
- 62 Finally, local authorities were asked how they provide "safe" community places or approaches for reporting incidents (eg hate crime, harassment, teasing, bullying), The most common response was that their councils lead a collective group including many community organisations. Other responses received included:
- staff at community facilities (eg libraries, swimming pools) receive relevant training for handling concerns
  - community-wide education workshops are held
  - local authorities work in collaboration with local emergency services such as the police and mental health providers
  - provision of awareness raising and support for mental health and bullying concerns by the local Youth Council
  - provision of an 0800 number and text option for local residents to report nuisance and anti-social behaviour in a public place.

*Examples of planning, policies and practices that are meeting the accessibility needs of disabled people in their local communities*

- 63 Thirteen local authorities submitted a total of 34 documents.

**Disability-related and older people's policies**

- 64 Nine disability-related policy documents (ie strategies, policies and action plans) of varying degrees of quality were submitted. These documents focus primarily on the accessibility of the following:
- public buildings, places and spaces
  - transport
  - community infrastructure (eg maintenance of accessible footpaths and crossings, urban design)
  - events
  - services and facilities

- information
  - housing
  - mobility parking
  - civic participation and democracy
  - employment.
- 65 Other areas covered include: engagement, consultation and partnership with the disability community, health and safety, social connectedness and wellbeing, and data collection.
- 66 In addition to the nine disability-related policy documents, three additional policy documents submitted focused on older people. One document relates primarily to the transport needs of older people in rural communities. The remaining two older people's documents address the eight outcomes in the World Health Organisation's Age-friendly Cities and Communities.<sup>5</sup> One of these documents also addresses safety as a ninth outcome.
- 67 The issues addressed in the older people's policy-related documents point to the close alignment between ageing and disability. For example, the 2013 Disability Survey shows that 21 percent of adults under 65 have a disability, compared to 59 percent of adults aged 65 or over.<sup>6</sup>
- 68 The small number of disability-related policy documents submitted by the surveyed local authorities demonstrates that there is much room for improvement. It is reasonable to assume that sharing exemplars of disability strategies, policies and action plans could enable local authorities across New Zealand to learn from each other and promote new accessibility initiatives.

### **Terms of Reference**

- 69 Five councils submitted Terms of Reference documents developed for their disability and accessibility advisory groups.
- 70 Work could be done to prepare a national guidance document for the establishment and running of local authority disability advisory groups, ensuring consistency.

### **Emergency management and safety plans**

- 71 Three councils submitted emergency management and safety documents. None of these documents reflected the needs and concerns of disabled people and older people. Given that disabled people are more vulnerable to the fallout from emergencies (eg emergency related natural hazards), local authorities are well placed to mitigate the risks for their local disabled residents.

### **Accessibility in practice**

- 72 Only two documents submitted were examples of accessibility in practice: a letter from the mother of a disabled child thanking her local council for the installation of an accessible playground, and a press release about the installation of a mobility scooter charging station at the local library.

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<sup>5</sup> The eight outcomes in the World Health Organisation's Age-friendly Cities and Communities are: outdoor spaces and public buildings, transport and mobility, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, and community support and health services.

<sup>6</sup> [http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/health/disabilities/DisabilitySurvey\\_HOTP2013.aspx](http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/disabilities/DisabilitySurvey_HOTP2013.aspx)

### **Council-produced documents for businesses and events**

- 73 Three councils submitted documents providing information on accessibility for local businesses and community events. The quality of these documents varied in terms of their usefulness for other local authorities.
- 74 It is reasonable to conclude from the analysis of the documents that a substantial amount of work is required to develop robust accessibility policies and practices that will make a positive difference in the everyday lives of disabled people in communities throughout New Zealand.

## **Appendix 1: Overview of Survey questions**

### **Leadership**

- How strongly is your local authority advocating for accessibility?
- Who are the leaders driving accessibility improvements in your community?
- How is your local authority showing leadership and influence in promoting a culture which prioritises accessibility?

### **Participation**

- How would you rate the accessibility of your local authority's processes for participation?
- Which of the following apply to how your local authority includes the voices of disabled people in election processes, policy development and implementation?
  - Our local authority has an accessibility advisory group which meets regularly. The members represent specific sector groups.
  - Our local authority has an accessibility advisory group which meets regularly. The members are selected through an open application process.
  - Our local authority has an older persons' advisory group which meets regularly. The members represent specific sector groups.
  - Our local authority has an older persons' advisory group which meets regularly. The members are selected through an open application process.
  - Our local authority has no accessibility or older persons' advisory group.
- What other civic participation supports does your local authority use for disabled people?

### **Data collection and planning**

- How well does your local authority use data on accessibility?
- Which of the following does your local authority use to help inform its thinking on accessibility issues?
  - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
  - The New Zealand Disability Strategy
  - The Accessibility Charter
- What information does your local authority collect on accessibility?
- What are your local authority's priorities and timeframes for progress on accessibility?
- What other organisations does your local authority use to benchmark your progress on accessibility?

- What policies and other resources does your local authority use to support accessibility?
- What barriers has your local authority identified as constraining your progress?
- What would assist with progressing this work?

### **Access to information and services**

- How accessible do you consider the disabled people living in your area find your local authority's information and services?
- How do you ensure disabled people can access the information and services that are important to them?

### **Transport**

- How accessible is your local authority's transport network?
- How is your local authority supporting the provision of accessible transport options, including parking?
- How well is your local authority coordinating delivery of public transport (Regional Councils only)?

### **Built and public spaces**

- How accessible are the built spaces in your local authority area?
- How accessible are the public spaces, including for disabled children, in your local authority area?
- Which of the following is/are your local authority working on to increase accessibility?
  - Social housing
  - Events
  - Sport and recreation programmes
  - Footpaths
  - Building entranceways
  - Accessible signage (eg of public buildings, spaces and maps)
  - Local natural environments and parks
  - Public toilets
  - Buildings and other built features
  - Other
- How else are disabled people enabled to participate in activities in your local authority area?

## **Resilience and inclusive communities**

- How resilient do you consider your community is?
- How is your local authority supporting the development of inclusive communities?
- How does your local authority's emergency management planning reflect inclusion?
- How is your local authority providing "safe" community places or approaches for reporting incidents such as hate crime, harassment, teasing or bullying?