



removal of barriers preventing disabled people from engaging with the Church.

Members unanimously backed a motion which also called for better data collection, more inclusive language during services, and more disabled people working within the Church.

The motion also encouraged dioceses to work together to employ full-time dedicated Disability Advisers.

Introducing the motion, the Revd Tim Goode, from the Diocese of Southwark, told Synod: "In God we have a new dignity and God calls us to fullness of life.

"For many disabled people being able to fully participate in the life and worship of our local church community has been a constant and often insurmountable challenge.

"The Church has a history of failing to notice or acknowledge disabled people and at worst has discriminated against them.

Adding, currently: "The Church is not a safe place for disabled people to flourish. It is not a safe place because many believe that disclosing disability or neurodiversity will lead to discrimination, for disabled people are all too often misrepresented as passive and devoid of personal agency."

A number of speeches and personal testimonies from Synod members were heard in support of the motion.

Fiona MacMillan from London Diocese said that: "By and large, churches are built and run by and for the well and the neurotypical."

Sarah Tupling, from Deaf Anglicans, signed her speech to Synod where she supported the Motion and called for more spending on training for deaf clergy.

The motion was passed, unanimously, by all three houses of the Synod.□

## More information:

- The full motion, as passed, is as follows:
  - That this Synod, affirming disabled people (with hidden as well as visible disabilities) to be fearfully and wonderfully made in the image and likeness of God, and mindful of the progress already made in removing some of the barriers which disabled people, clergy and lay, face; commit to working towards the removal of all remaining barriers to full participation for disabled people in the life and ministry of the church, and, in initiating that process:
    - (a) request the Faith and Order Commission and the Liturgical Commission to consider how our liturgies might be made more inclusive to disabled people (e.g. by removing rubrics such as “all stand”);
    - (b) call upon the Research and Statistics team to interrogate existing data and gather new data, which quantifies the numbers of disabled people among clergy, whilst also planning to extend to include lay ministers and NCI/diocesan staff in the future, so that Synod can monitor the representation of disabled people within the church and encourage accountability for progress.
    - (c) request the Archbishops’ Council to introduce legislation to amend the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018 to require every DAC to include at least one person with direct experience and knowledge of accessibility issues in its membership or co-opted if not appointed as a member; 2
    - (d) “acknowledging that the General Synod motion passed in July 2007 (that every Diocese should appoint a lead person on disability issues), request that the ongoing review of dioceses, and recognising that resources for additional officers in every diocese are limited, encourage dioceses to cluster together to employ a full time Disability Adviser across a manageable group of dioceses.
- A briefing paper was shared with Synod members ahead of the vote and is [available on the Church’s website](#).
- Synod voted:
  - In favour: 32 (bishops) 157 (clergy) 162 (laity). □ None against. No abstentions.

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