

Small grant scheme ideas

The Disability Project Parish Grants Scheme offers grant funds of up to £5,000 for small projects aiming to improve accessibility for those who are Deaf, disabled and/or neurodivergent.

This scheme is available at present to parishes in the Province of York.

You may have already conducted an accessibility audit and have ideas for projects which would benefit your church members and visitors in this group.

If however you'd like to do an audit, but aren't sure how, a useful starting point might be the Diocese of Blackburn webpage which includes a link to a parish accessibility audit:

<https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/disability-accessability>

The Diocese of London also has a template for an in-depth accessibility audit:

<https://www.london.anglican.org/church-and-parish-support/diversity-and-inclusion/disability-ministry/the-360-accessibility-audit/>

This document presents some ideas for quick and cost-effective actions and projects which might be viable and approvable for a grant application from the Parish Grants Scheme.

Each section shows an action which could be taken, or a question for consideration, and in the bullet points an itemized list of the potential costs of taking action here, for you to research further.

We hope this is helpful as you consider your approach.

Please do contact us if you have any queries about audits, the Parish Grant Scheme, or the wider Disability Project

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Events

Hold a 'Disability Awareness Sunday' service and promote to local people.

- Invited speaker fees
- Event management expenses (decoration, publicity design)
- Printing and distributing fliers and leaflets



Research local disability-interest groups (including online forums and community groups) and make contact. Invite them to church meetings/activities.

- Event management expenses for a special "welcome" event or service (décor, refreshments, publicity)

Extending Involvement

Can you encourage and support members of your congregation to get involved with mission to and with disabled people?

- Cost of activities that will make use of people's skills e.g. take church outreach to local groups, residential homes, special schools for disabled children etc.
- Cost of investigating and setting up partnerships and involvement with local disability organisations, including co-organised events

Hearing



Is there an induction loop (permanent or portable) covering at least part of the venue which is checked at least monthly by a hearing aid user?

Does any sound system in the building provide good, clear sound with adequate voice levels?

Are there sufficient microphones for all leaders in worship?

Are they fixed or can they be used flexibly?

- Cost of installing, checking or improving induction (hearing aid) loop.
- Cost of microphones, or other improvements to sound system, eg to enable all audio from all contributors to be fed through the induction loop

Do you have links with other churches who offer services with BSL signing, or Deaf Church services?

Could you partner with those churches to provide Deaf Church at your own venue?

- Event management for a special Deaf Church or BSL signed service for the local area, to raise awareness and give Deaf Christians a chance to invite others to church.

Neurodivergence

Are needs of neurodivergent children and adults provided for?

- Provision of noise-cancelling headsets, quiet spaces, sensory toys and so on.

Parking and vehicle access

Is there a suitable solid level surface where disabled people can park or be dropped off? Is accessible parking clearly signed?

- Time to consult local council, potential contractors, architects where necessary
- Cost of a parking sign
- Cost of any work commissioned on the kerb, pathway, or parking space

Ramps and steps

Do all doors have a threshold less than 15mm high?

Is there ramped or level access within all areas of the venue to be used for your church activities?

- Cost of portable ramps where no other solution is feasible

Do all steps have a handrail? (It's ok for single steps to not have one.)

Are handrails in contrasting colours to the surrounding wall?

Do steps and stairs have colour-contrast anti-slip marking on the edgings?

- Cost of contractor to install handrail
- Qualified contractor to attach contrast markings and paints



Seating

Can you provide a choice of seating types – chairs with arm rests which help with standing up from seated, comfortable chairs or sofas for those with chronic pain or fatigue?



- Cost of chairs with arm rests...
- ...and chairs with comfortable padded surfaces

Are wheelchair spaces available in the main seating area of the church, rather than at the back or the side?

- Cost of changing the layout of fixed seating such as pews including gaining formal permissions where necessary

In eating and meeting spaces, do tables, chairs and the layout allow for use by wheelchair users and other people with disabilities?

- Cost of purchasing appropriate height tables, altering layout in other appropriate ways

Sight

There should be good quality diffused lighting in all areas used for your church's activities.

Can speakers' faces be seen clearly - well-lit and free from obstructions?

- Cost of checking lighting and bulbs regularly.
- Installing additional lighting or alternative lightbulbs if required.

Can you provide written material such as hymn/song sheets and service/notice sheets in large print (minimum 16 point font size)?

- Cost of producing and printing large-print copies of service sheets / hymn books (eg a loose leaf folder of most frequently sung hymns/songs in a large print format)
- Purchase cost of large-print Bibles and hymn books

Could you provide a tablet or iPad with a Bible app, hymn lyrics and your service sheet pre-installed, with large print/zoom option, for use by a visitor or church member with impaired vision?

- Cost of tablet and apps
- Anti-theft security cable for storage when not in use

Signage and noticeboards

Ensure your website and promotional material include your welcome for disabled people and positive images of disabled people.

Promote accessible features of your church on the church website, in newsletters and local publicity.

- Volunteer time liaising with church members for photography with permission
- Fees for time of website designer/manager



Can you ensure the entrance to your church is easy to find and there is clear information about where and when services and events take place?

- Provide additional signage if required.
- Correct existing signage to ensure it is clear

Make sure display stands and bookstalls are visible, reachable and accessible by people with disabilities.

- Cost of redesigning / purchasing new bookstalls and display stands

Training

Train your church and activity leaders, including stewards, welcomers and those offering refreshments, in meeting the needs of disabled people, those with physical and sensory disabilities, and those with mental health issues and learning disabilities.

- Purchase of appropriate literature
- Attending training events
- Arranging a training event and inviting an expert speaker

Can you train some of your church and activity leaders to use Makaton signing for people with learning disabilities?

- Cost of training in Makaton, for example from <https://www.counteveryonein.org.uk/>

