

# Caritas

Diocese of Salford



## Increasing accessibility in our parishes resource

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Supporting people experiencing poverty,  
homelessness, displacement and disadvantage  
across Greater Manchester and Lancashire.

[caritassalford.org.uk](http://caritassalford.org.uk)



Pope Francis



# Increasing accessibility in our parishes

“Every man and every woman, in whatever condition they find themselves, is the bearer not only of rights that must be recognised and guaranteed, but also of even deeper needs, such as the need to belong, to relate and to cultivate his/her spiritual life to so as to experience it to its fullness and bless the Lord for this unique and wonderful gift.”

*Pope Francis (December 2022)*

Accessibility is about ensuring that everyone can take part and contribute in a way, and to the extent, which suits them best. It is a basic requirement to honour our God-given human dignity and deeper than a matter of convenience. No person should be unable to participate because of an unmet access need. Accessibility barriers tend to exist in terms of a person’s physical, mental and emotional, learning, sensory or communication needs.

## Research shows that:

- Approximately 45% of pension age adults are disabled
- 1 in 5 disabled people avoid going out to ‘social’ gatherings because of negative attitudes and behaviour
- Disabled people are nearly three times more likely than non-disabled people to feel lonely ‘always’ or ‘often’
- The average household with at least one person who is disabled faces £975 a month in extra costs.

**How many people in your parish could this impact?**



## What is Caritas Salford doing?

Everything we do should be approached through the lens of safeguarding and promoting and protecting the dignity of every individual, ensuring our actions and initiatives foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all, especially with the church. This includes being vigilant in recognising, responding to, referring, and recording any concerns about the safety or well-being of individuals.

### Events

Caritas Salford periodically delivers larger events to support accessibility campaigns and raise awareness. You can read about our upcoming [events](#) also our recent events our [news section](#). Examples include disability hate crime awareness sessions: “[No place for hate](#)” and “[Promoting positive perceptions of disability and preventing hate crime](#)”.

### Training

Throughout the year, Caritas facilitates awareness sessions on a variety of topics, often suggested by our advocates and in many cases, facilitation is also supported by advocates. We really encourage you to think about how you can support this in your parish. This could be in terms of setting up sessions in parishes, advertising or delivering a specific topic known to the individual.

### Votive Masses and talks

With some success, we have begun offering votive Masses to improve awareness and support for accessibility needs in parishes. This has sometimes been done on a parish scale, and at other times on a deanery basis. We also have regular Caritas Masses to celebrate human dignity.

These often have specific liturgy, promoting the love of God and the dignity of each human person and a homily on the theme of welcome and promoting accessibility. If you have an idea about a suitable guest speaker, including those with lived experiences, discuss with the parish priest about including input from them. At times, this could be the Caritas accessibility coordinator, or an accessibility advocate or volunteer with a specific interest.

### Recruiting and supporting accessibility advocates

Caritas is always looking for encourage and support people to become advocate for positive accessibility solutions in our projects and parishes. By identifying unmet needs with a view to encouraging positive solutions many barriers have been overcome, and people experience inclusion. Often, the smallest change can make a world of difference to a person - **will you help?**

We encourage an empowerment model of accessibility advocacy whereby we support people to gain confidence, skills and knowledge so that they can achieve personal and collective change. For our accessibility advocates, this often comes in support of individuals in communicating their rights, needs, and preferences to others, such as parish peers, clergy, and diocese officials. This can be as simple as allowing them space and safety to explain their experience. In doing this, it is hoped that positive solutions can be coproduced (between parish/diocese and individual) in line with the Human Rights Model of Disability and Catholic Social Teaching.



# What can you do?

## Individuals

We are looking for individuals to support the equality, inclusion, and access within the Diocese of Salford. Accessibility advocates will support people to voice their accessibility needs to clergy, parishes, events and even for pilgrimages organised. The advocate will liaise with the Caritas accessibility coordinator to seek supportive ideas for people with accessibility needs and potential opportunities for signposting.

You can read more about the role and apply [online here](#).

## Parishes

There is no such thing as a 'small' accessibility awareness activity. Any activity that creates a create scope for awareness and therefore supporting accessibility is worth it. Activity examples include:

- Pray the Caritas Prayer.
- Write an insert for the parish newsletter encouraging people to voice their accessibility needs.
- Celebrate the positive things that your parish does to promote accessibility such as having designated parking spaces, induction hearing loops and large print hymn books. These could be listed on the parish website, social media and/or newsletter.
- Keep your eyes open for potential accessibility barriers and raise these with the appropriate people seeking to plan to remove them. Remember you can always contact Caritas for support.
- Create a wall/table display highlighting various accessibility needs, disabilities and medical conditions. This could be updated to align with certain days throughout the year, such as those listed in the table at the end of this document.
- Organise an accessibility awareness session in your parish. Caritas can support you with this and deliver a variety of topics to help raise awareness of the needs of people in your parish. We also encourage our advocates to get involved with the training, offering input about their experiences.
- Organise a special Mass in your parish recognising the needs of others and celebrating the human dignity of the person. Caritas can support you with this and provide appropriate liturgy.
- Talk to people about disability and accessibility needs - break down the taboo!
- Let people know about the [Caritas accessibility awareness sessions and events](#), encourage, perhaps lead a group to attend.

## Caritas prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray for everyone in our Caritas Salford family.

For people living on the margins or in poverty in its many forms. May their lives be transformed, and their human dignity and hope restored by experiencing the loving kindness of others.

We pray for Caritas volunteers, staff and supporters, who enable us to walk in solidarity alongside people who need time and support rebuild their lives and find their own voice.

May Your Holy Spirit bring us the courage to speak out against the injustices we witness daily in our communities and bring about positive change for the common good of all, not just the few.

May we always remember the true meaning of caritas is 'love in action'. Help us to respond with our hands outstretched towards the wider 'we'. We make our prayer, through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son. Stay with us, Lord, on our journey. Amen.

# Accessibility awareness dates

There are many important accessibility awareness themes that are brought to the attention of the public by annual campaigns and/or celebrations.

Here is a selection, by no means are these indicated to take priority, rather just to give an idea of what may be suitable for you, in

your parish, to highlight. Some dates are the same each year, others move slightly to fall on a specific day of the week. If you are unsure or you can think of any more significant dates that others would benefit from knowing about, please do let us know.

<p><b>January</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Caritas Sunday</li> <li>● World Braille Day</li> <li>● World Leprosy Day</li> </ul>	<p><b>February</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Raynaud's Awareness Month</li> <li>● Rare Disease Day</li> <li>● Children's Mental Health Week</li> </ul>	<p><b>March</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Endometriosis Awareness Month</li> <li>● World Down Syndrome Day</li> <li>● World Bipolar Day</li> </ul>
<p><b>April</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● World Autism Day</li> <li>● Auditory Processing Awareness Day</li> <li>● World Parkinson's Day</li> </ul>	<p><b>May</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stroke Awareness Month</li> <li>● Global Accessibility Awareness Day</li> <li>● World MS Day</li> </ul>	<p><b>June</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learning disability week</li> <li>● Tourette Awareness Day</li> <li>● Deafblind Awareness Week</li> </ul>
<p><b>July</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Disability Pride Month</li> <li>● Schizophrenia Awareness Day</li> <li>● World Hepatitis Day</li> </ul>	<p><b>August</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Int. Assistance Dog Week</li> </ul>	<p><b>September</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● World Alzheimer's Month</li> <li>● Youth Mental Health Day</li> <li>● International Day of Sign Languages</li> </ul>
<p><b>October</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Down's Syndrome awareness month</li> <li>● Dyslexia Awareness Month</li> <li>● World Cerebral Palsy Day</li> </ul>	<p><b>November</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Men's Health Awareness Month</li> <li>● Purple Tuesday</li> <li>● World COPD Day</li> </ul>	<p><b>December</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Disability Awareness Month</li> <li>● International Day of Disabled Persons</li> <li>● Human Rights Day</li> </ul>



# Get in touch

If you have any questions or want to let us know what is happening in your parish and community, please contact our Parish and Communities Engagement Officer, Matthew Yates: [m.yates@caritassalford.org.uk](mailto:m.yates@caritassalford.org.uk)

To subscribe to our Caritas monthly newsletter please click [here](#), or email [comms@caritassalford.org.uk](mailto:comms@caritassalford.org.uk)

The information in this booklet is correct at time of publication (January 2025). If any information is incorrect, please contact [m.yates@caritassalford.org.uk](mailto:m.yates@caritassalford.org.uk)



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