

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE: Camden's Accessibility Pledge for Licensed Venues	
REPORT OF: Director of Recreation and Public Safety	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Licensing Committee	DATE: 11 February 2026
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>Camden Council is committed to ensuring that its night-time economy is safe, inclusive and welcoming for everyone. The Council recognises that accessibility in licensed venues is an essential part of this ambition. While the Licensing Act 2003 does not explicitly list accessibility as one of the four licensing objectives, the Council's responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, along with its wider corporate priorities on equality, diversity and inclusion, is a key consideration in how licensed premises are designed, managed and operated. This is to ensure that residents visitors and workers with disabilities or other access needs can safely and comfortably enjoy Camden's licensed venues.</p> <p>To promote accessibility in licensed venues and to encourage and support licensed venues to address accessibility concerns, the council is proposing the development of a local accessibility pledge. This report proposes an approach to the development of a local accessibility plan.</p>	
<p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>The following documents have been used in the preparation of this report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Licensing Act 2003 2. Equality Act 2010 	
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<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>The Licensing Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Note and comment on the report and proposed approach; and ii) Approve the development and pilot of a Camden Accessibility Pledge 	

Signed:



Date: 21 January 2026

Ollie Jones, Director of Recreation and Public Safety

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Camden is renowned for its vibrant nightlife, historic pubs, and diverse entertainment venues. Ensuring that licensed venues are accessible and inclusive for all individuals including those with disabilities, LGBTQ+ communities, and other marginalised groups is essential for fostering a welcoming environment.
- 1.2. Under the Equality Act 2010, licensed premises have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure their services are accessible to all including disabled people. Despite this, disparities in access remain, particularly in older venues, temporary event spaces, and late-night economy premises.
- 1.3. This report seeks the Licensing Committee's endorsement to develop and pilot a Camden Accessibility Pledge for licensed venues across the borough.
- 1.4. The proposed pledge is intended to encourage and promote inclusive access to licensed premises for disabled people and those with access needs, through a voluntary, supportive and proportionate framework.

2. Background

- 2.1. Camden has the second largest and most diverse night-time economy in London, with a high concentration of pubs, clubs, restaurants, theatres and cultural venues.
- 2.2. While licensed venues are subject to the Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments, evidence from residents, advocacy groups, and service users indicates that barriers to access remain prevalent, including:
 - Physical barriers (steps, narrow entrances, inaccessible toilets)
 - Communication barriers (lack of clear information, signage, or staff awareness)
 - Attitudinal barriers (lack of confidence or understanding among staff)
- 2.3. The Licensing Act 2003 does not include accessibility as a licensing objective. However, local authorities can use non-regulatory mechanisms to promote good practice and inclusion within the licensed sector.
- 2.4. The proposed Accessibility Pledge provides a positive, collaborative approach, supporting premises to improve accessibility while complementing existing legal duties and regulatory frameworks.

3. Policy and Strategic Context

- 3.1. Camden's Statement of Licensing Policy sets out the Council's commitment to promoting a safe, inclusive and welcoming borough, recognising the significant role that licensed premises play in community life, culture and the night-time economy.
- 3.2. While accessibility is not a statutory licensing objective under the Licensing Act 2003, the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy emphasises partnership working with responsible businesses, the importance of good management practices and

the role of licensing in supporting wider Council priorities including equality, inclusion, inclusive growth, access to culture, supporting responsible and sustainable businesses, strengthening partnership working with local communities and the voluntary sector.

- 3.3. The proposed Camden Accessibility Pledge supports the spirit and intention of the licensing objectives, particularly, public safety, by reducing barriers and risks for customers with access needs and prevention of public nuisance, by encouraging orderly, well-managed premises that anticipates and respond to diverse customer needs.
- 3.4. The pledge also aligns with the Licensing Policy's emphasis on early engagement and pre-application advice, encouraging best practice beyond minimum legal compliance.

4. Rationale for a Camden Accessibility Pledge

- 4.1. Feedback from disability advocacy group 'Attitude is Everything', disabled residents and visitors, indicates that information about accessibility is often inconsistent or unavailable in licensed venues. Reasonable adjustments for disabled patrons are sometimes reactive rather than planned. It was also noted that good practice exists but is not widely shared or recognised.
- 4.2. The pledge would seek to encourage continuous improvement, while recognising the diversity and constraints of licensed premises including historic and older buildings. It would promote transparency so customers can make informed choices.
- 4.3. In line with Camden's Statement of Licensing Policy, the pledge would promote good management practices, encourage licence holders to consider accessibility at an early stage and support a licensing environment that is welcoming, well-run and reflective of Camden's diverse communities.

5. Proposed Accessibility Pledge

- 5.1. The Camden Accessibility Pledge will invite licensed premises to commit to a set of core accessibility principles, supported by practical actions.
- 5.2. Participating premises would commit to improving access, communication, staff awareness, and engagement with customers regarding accessibility needs in line with the indicative Accessibility Pledge Commitments (Appendix 1).

6. Delivery and Governance

Development Phase

- 6.1. Following the Committee meeting in July 2025 and November 2025, officers have engaged with relevant stakeholders in developing the pledge. This include engagement with disability access groups like "Attitude is everything", residents' groups, trade representatives and licence holders. Further engagement with

licensing responsible authorities, London Licensing Manager's forum and other local authorities to review best practice have also taken place and has informed the development of the pledge.

Implementation

- 6.2. Licensed premises will be encouraged to voluntarily sign-up and adhere to the pledge. A simple self-assessment form or checklist will be developed and all licensed venues in the borough will be encouraged to complete.
- 6.3. Venues who sign-up to the Accessibility Pledge would be recognised through Council website listing, window stickers or digital badges and or promotion through Camden communications, after officers have visited to assess and confirm the provisions in place to assist disabled access.
- 6.4. As part of the pre-application process, officers will strongly encourage new venues making a licenced application to engage with and sign-up to the Accessibility Pledge.

Monitoring

- 6.5. A light-touch monitoring program will be developed and undertaken by officers from the licensing team. This will include a periodic review of uptake and impact of the pledge. The approach will focus on the use of feedback to drive improvement rather than enforcement.

Relationship to Licensing and Enforcement

- 6.6. The Accessibility Pledge does not form part of Camden's Statement of Licensing Policy and does not create new policy requirements. The pledge would not replace or override legal duties under the Equalities Act 2010.
- 6.7. Participation in the pledge will not be taken into account when determining applications for new licences or variations, reviews of licences or when making enforcement decisions.
- 6.8. However, the pledge provides a shared framework for dialogue between the Council and licence holders, supporting the Statement of Licensing Policy's objective of working constructively with operators to promote responsible management and inclusive access.

7. Comments of the Director of Finance

- 7.1. There are no material financial implications concerning this report. The Director of Finance has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to add.
- 7.2. Any additional costs (e.g. design, communication costs) would be minimal and subject to approval.

8. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

- 8.1. To give effect to the Council's public law duties and specific duties in relation to equalities, decision makers must take into account in coming to any decision the Council's equality duties and have due regard to them.
- 8.2. In summary, these legal obligations require the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to:
 - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act (the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership is also relevant);
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't; and
 - c) foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't (which involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding).
- 8.3. Under the Duty, the relevant protected characteristics are Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion, Sex, and Sexual orientation.

9. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 9.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) regarding the proposed changes has been produced.
- 9.2. The EIA has not identified that the proposed changes will adversely affect the holders of existing premises licences, those applying to hold licences, Responsible Authorities under the Licensing Act 2003, Council officers, and existing and potential residents of the borough.
- 9.3. The proposed changes will have a positive impact by aligning with the priorities of the Council including, but not limited to, promoting fairness and equality and promoting better health. The EIA identified no negative impacts on those with protected characteristics relating to age, disability, health, sex and socio-economic status.

10. Environmental Implications

- 10.1. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

11. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Camden Accessibility Pledge
- Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

REPORT ENDS