I write as Chairman and on behalf of the entire membership of the Sovereign Harbour Disability Association, based in Sovereign Harbour, Eastbourne, East Sussex, England. Our members are the deaf and disabled who live in this area.

 We write with evidence we as a relevant organisation believe should be included in the England shadow report. ﻿We are deeply disturbed by the undeniable fact that some of the very serious disability issues we outline below should have been dealt with 25 years ago but so far have been ignored, yet now form part of the laws or regulations of the majority of countries overseas.

Feel free to publish the items below both in my name and the name of the Sovereign Harbour Disabiliity Association, Flat 18, 16 San Diego Way, Sovereign Harbour North, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN23 5BG, England, UK.

**1. The current Equality Act 2010** - see [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents)

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| [Equality Act 2010](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents)  An Act to make provision to require Ministers of the Crown and others when making strategic decisions about the exercise of their functions to have regard to the desirability of reducing socio-economic inequalities; to reform and harmonise equality law and restate the greater part of the enactments relating to discrimination and harassment related to certain personal characteristics; to enable certain employers to be required to publish information about the differences in pay between male and female employees; to prohibit victimisation in certain circumstances; to require the exercise of certain functions to be with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and other prohibited conduct; to enable duties to be imposed in relation to the exercise of public procurement functions; to increase equality of opportunity; to amend the law relating to rights and responsibilities in family relationships; and for connected purposes.  www.legislation.gov.uk |

 - replaced the earlier Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). It is a much—watered down version of the DDA. It does not help the disabled in Britain in the way the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its equivalents  in Canada and elsewhere do. Here in the UK, the legal and social welfare systems for the disabled badly need updating and improving. Yet local disability groups are not making waves, are not demanding legislative changes at local authority and national parliamentary levels. The lack of UK legislative teeth has so infuriated some overseas visitors that they have complained publicly**. In their own countries**they are protected by law both in the public and private sectors, They expect to find similar comprehensive disability laws apply here**.**They are supremely dismayed to discover we get no such comprehensive and protected by law conditions here, not even from local authorities or police from whom we expect in vain to come to our aid.

2. Despite the Equality Act, public and private buildings catering to the public are not required by law to be publicly assessable for disabled people. Present laws merely require owners of public and private buildings including churches  to make reasonable changes. But in the USA, also Canada, Europe and beyond, it is a legal requirement that all public and private buildings and building developments, including hotels and those on historical registers must be fully accessible to the registered disabled.

3. Public Transportation systems are not required or backed-up by law to be disabled-accessible. What facilities for the disabled are stated have no legislative teeth.

4. No National Disability Identification.. **In the USA, Canada, Europe, etc. all who are registered as permanently-disabled carry a state-issued but nationally accepted identification card with their photograph, contact details and type of disability shown on it.** Thus they can prove they are disabled and as such are entitled to use disabled facilities including having cars pre-registered for disability tolls exemption and other  relevant services both nationwide and abroad. **No such registration exists at national or county (local authority) level for any UK-based disabled.** Which means that when moving house from one UK local authority area to another, or applying for disability or seniors disability benefits or concessions from a new area, the disabled have to reapply each time, using the cumbersome method for each application of sending a copy of the official disability letter issued at national level. Making matters worse is that each local authority has different regulations. There are several private-sector Disabled Identification and/or Access card issuers, each claiming their cards, issued yearly or for three years, at a cost of £10-£15 per person, are accepted by various organizations, but to date they have not said specifically that they are accepted by councils or local authorities in lieu of an official eligibility letter. All the latter will still require you, when applying for benefits, to prove it with production of documentation that instead of being credit-card style can run into more than 8 printed pages.

5. No national Carers Identification. In **the USA, Canada, Europe, etc. all who are registered as Caregivers (Carers in UK) carry a state-issued but nationally accepted identification card with their photograph, contact details and type of disability shown on it.** In the European Union and certain other countries, similar identity cards are issued. Thus they can prove they are disabled and as such are entitled to use disabled facilities including having cars pre-registered for disability tolls exemption and other  relevant services both nationwide and abroad.

6. No legal provision for the disabled to have support and assistance animals. Unlike in USA, Canada, Europe, etc.

**Assistance Service animals** - specifically called this to distinguish them from mere pets - are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. These tasks can include things like pulling a wheelchair, guiding a person who is visually impaired, alerting a person who is having a seizure, or even calming a person who suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The tasks a service dog can perform are not limited to this list. However, the work or task a service dog does must be directly related to the person's disability. Service dogs may accompany persons with disabilities into places that the public normally goes. This includes state and local government buildings, businesses open to the public, public transportation, and non-profit organizations open to the public. The law that allows a trained service dog to accompany a person with a disability is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**Assistance and Emotional support animals** (typically dogs or cats though this can include other species) - again to distinguish them from mere pets - provide therapeutic benefits to their owners through companionship. The animals provide emotional support and comfort to individuals with psychiatric disabilities and other mental impairments. The animals are **not**specifically trained to perform tasks for a person who suffers from emotional disabilities. Unlike a service animal, an emotional support animal is not granted access to places of public accommodation. Under the USA's federal Fair Housing Act (FHA), an emotional support animal is viewed as a "reasonable accommodation" in a housing unit that has a "no pets" rule for its residents.

7. Disabled Parking in U.K. is a mockery of what it is in other countries. Only in designated public areas does it apply and when it does the fines for mis-use by those not entitled are a fraction of what they are in the USA and elsewhere. There, private parking in shopping malls also falls under the law. This ridiculous situation just in the U.K. has existed for over 25 years with no improvement and has made the U.K. notorious worldwide. One reason is because the police in the U.K. and in British Overseas Territories will not intervene, unlike Police elsewhere.

8. Disabled in U.K. who can drive or be driven are  not issued with Disability Licence Plates registration, unlike in USA and elsewhere.

9.Hotels in U.K. offer little or no protection or real access provision for the disabled. **Their websites claim many have accessible rooms,**the British and European way of saying they are for the disabled/physically handicapped/challenged.They may be by UK standards but rarely do they meet USA ADA-compliant requirements**.** Unfortunately, here in the UK, unlike in USA, Canada, Europe etc. visitors who are disabled/will need to confirm in advance directly with a hotel that it has the kind of  accessibility they need.

* **On their websites, if they offer accessible rooms for the disabled**, **they do not show what measures are in place if lifts (elevators) are not working** in the event of an emergency when accessible rooms are not on the ground floor.
* **They do not always state that some properties do not have lifts or elevators,**as they should because some walking disabled may not be able o use a staircase or stairs**,** especially if they do not have banisters on both sides.
* **They do not always state that they have on-site free Disabled Parking for their guests.**When they do not have this, or fail to show it, they are not suitable for disabled guests who cannot be expected to walk to roadside parking that may be some distance away. If when you get to a hotel, bring your valid Disabled Parking Card and ask to park in a disabled Parking area. If you cannot because someone else who does not have such a badge has parked there, lodge a complaint. The property asks for registration numbers of cars when guests check in. If the property will not contact the owner to move the car when it is parked in a disability area with no disabled parking sign shown by the owner, then report it to an organization (like this one) which will do something about it. Merely complaining to your nearest (non-activist) disability group is not enough, most British disability groups will not gripe publicly or try to take it further for fear of losing their local council-funded support or other local funding.
* **Many UK hotel properties do not state they do not have any, or if they do, very few, walk-in  wet rooms for disabled guests.**They should not be expected, with their disabilities, to climb over a bath with a shower above it, and then step over it again to get out. Some hotels and guest houses claim they are disability friendly but their disabled rooms often have bathrooms with standard-length tubs not even supplied automatically with a safety tub mat. Unfortunately for the  disabled, who are not given legal preference because of their disability,  when a person who is not really functionally disabled asks for a disabled room and one is available out of a very limited number, the hotels cannot refuse. Such a disabled room is often no longer available to a severely disabled guest. There are no laws in Britain that require a hotel to ask a guest to show appropriate disability identification, as there are in the USA and elsewhere.

10. **Major Improvements are needed in The Strategic Review of Policing in England , Wales,  Northern Ireland and Scotland.**The police don't act to stop any anti-disabled abuses, nor will they act in any other disabled-particular matter, such as in disabled-only parking space abuses in both council owned or street and private shopping mall car parks, or cars parked on pavements or dropped kerbs, unlike their European and North American counterparts who will in all these cases. Yes, in many respects the British Police are regarded as a model to the world, but in the particular ways described above they also have a terrible reputation, unfortunately also followed not only in the U.K. but also in other British Police Services in the British Overseas Territories (BOTs)  such as Bermuda, according to very recent and earlier press reports going back many years such as in Bermuda’s daily newspaper The Royal Gazette. Why is this? Because, unlike in Europe, Canada and USA, etc where the police are deemed to be law enforcement officers and do so, in Britain and  the BOTs they seem to be and act as mere community officers and will not assist in prosecuting those who mistreat the disabled. (This disabled elderly journalist author has seen this for himself when he worked in Bermuda and the USA. He has noted how in Bermuda the Bermuda Police Service declines to help the disabled in parking violations of the non-disabled, citing the UK Police as their example and in the USA. particularly in some of the post popular areas of the USA for UK visitors, namely Miami in Florida, Boston in Massachusetts and New York where principle convicted offenders in their courts for disabled parking violations by the non-disabled, because the police are involved, are Brits who say plaintively that the police do not charge them in the UK so they don't see why they should be prosecuted in the USA. It is not only not accepted as a valid excuse it has also become a standing joke in the USA that hurts the reputation of the British Police).

In the matter of dropped kerb abuses at the end of your driveway (which in most local authorities - planning laws say must be provided), the Traffic Management Act 2004 applies. This act covers restrictions on parking where a kerb has been dropped for a number of reasons including for the purpose of "assisting vehicles entering or leaving the carriageway across the footway, cycle track or verge".  Exceptions to this include where a vehicle is parked outside residential premises "by or with the consent (but not consent given for reward) of the occupier of the premises" but this exception does not apply in the case of a shared driveway; emergency vehicles; when a vehicle is being used for the purposes of delivering goods/unloading etc at the premises (has to be 'reasonable' and for no longer than 20 minutes); and vehicles undertaking any building, signing, utilities or sewer works or collecting waste on behalf of local authority, removing a traffic obstruction. If you think you could have a case under this piece of legislation,  complainants should first try to find and speak to the vehicle owner. In a friendly and polite manner, tell them about the act and that you'd like to get your vehicle out. If they refuse, call the police on 101 - not 999 (it's more than likely NOT an emergency and if it is, the vehicle owner will probably cooperate with you anyhow). Tell them about the problem, how long the vehicle has been there and that you need to get your car out. If they say there's nothing they can do, refer them to the Traffic Management act of 2004 (as it relates to dropped kerbs) and what the normal steps are. The police should be able to help you to take the right steps even if they won't do anything themselves immediately.

We who are disabled, frail and elderly, not only in Eastbourne where I live but throughout the country, now request that the Strategic Review of Policing in the entire U.K. and in the British Overseas Territories make it clear that in future they will protect us, not ignore us or hinder us. Protection of the disabled and vulnerable is a primary duty of police forces elsewhere in the world. This should happen here, too.