Article 10 – Right to life - States Parties reaffirm that every human being has the inherent right to life and shall take all necessary measures to ensure its effective enjoyment by persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community

Article 25 - Health: States Parties recognize that persons with disabilities have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability

My submission relates to the situation faced by disabled people in the UK during the Covid pandemic and relates to Articles 10, 19 and 25 in particular.

During the coronavirus pandemic disabled people have been particularly hard hit.  Two thirds of deaths in the UK have been disabled people or those with 'underlying health conditions'  ([https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2020/september/disabled-people-make-two-thirds-coronavirus-deaths-ons](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.disabilityrightsuk.org%2Fnews%2F2020%2Fseptember%2Fdisabled-people-make-two-thirds-coronavirus-deaths-ons&data=04%7C01%7C%7C35f150c327d04fafb1f508d9ac6ebad4%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637730413840950986%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=dheNA2%2F1kg2wD2eB8P8BsaXEdCydKfSeWZ13XytF0B0%3D&reserved=0) ).  The phrase 'underlying conditions' has been used repeatedly and in a pernicious way to suggest that disabled people's lives matter less and that 'normal' and 'fit' people need not worry about or take precautions to avoid spreading coronavirus because the only people dying are those who were already ill or disabled - 'they would have died soon anyway'.

The right to life of disabled people has been curtailed by the government's refusal to act in the interests of public health during the pandemic, a situation which continues to the present day.  The UK government failed and continues to fail to take measures which would reduce viral transmission, eg mandating the wearing of facemasks on public transport and in shops and other indoor public spaces (with public figures setting an example by wearing facemasks in public settings themselves), advising and assisting schools and offices with good ventilation, and setting up an effective track and trace system with proper support for isolation.  The PM has set an appalling example to the public by repeatedly failing to wear a facemask, in a hospital even.  MPs have also set a terrible example by refusing to wear facemasks in the House of Commons.  Many of the public have followed suit  - [https://twitter.com/mikegalsworthy/status/1461784651404660736?s=20](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2Fmikegalsworthy%2Fstatus%2F1461784651404660736%3Fs%3D20&data=04%7C01%7C%7C35f150c327d04fafb1f508d9ac6ebad4%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637730413840950986%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=Ibd5Kt3mmVQisp6sP0a9hsIH%2FvPKV9k07iwMsTgbffg%3D&reserved=0)

The impact of this on me personally and many others who are clinically vulnerable has been to force us to shield indefinitely, to more or less imprison us in our homes.  It has not felt safe for many of us who are clinically vulnerable to use public transport.  I have not used the tube since early March last year and have almost never felt able to use a train or bus in the last 20 months because many people are not wearing facemasks or observing social distancing.  Those of us who either cannot drive because of impairment or don't have a car are particularly hard hit.  I am old and do not need to use public transport to get to work but there are many clinically vulnerable people who do and they are put at serious risk.  The government has muddled public messaging about protective measures, and 'freedom day' in July led to more or less all restrictions being removed completely.  Some disabled people cannot use public transport at the best of times because of inaccessibility, but in the pandemic the situation has got far worse.

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|  | [Dr Mike Galsworthy on Twitter](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2Fmikegalsworthy%2Fstatus%2F1461784651404660736%3Fs%3D20&data=04%7C01%7C%7C35f150c327d04fafb1f508d9ac6ebad4%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637730413840960941%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=ht0SEHzFK8TNqml%2Fnp%2B5NLgg7mGoS7A9BSMFu0Zwwck%3D&reserved=0)“All these commuters not wearing masks because they say the PM doesn’t. That’s leadershipwang… https://t.co/a5T26BFnjR”twitter.com |

When the government doesn't protect public health, solely relying on vaccination when some have not been vaccinated and the vaccines do not work equally well for everyone, and seemingly deliberately allows the spread of coronavirus the result is that many disabled and chronically ill people are much less able to participate in the life of their communities.  Some of the public demand their 'freedom' but for these people to have freedom in a major pandemic others must be locked away.  There is no real freedom in a country where freedom for some means imprisonment for others who have committed no crime, apart from the crime of being disabled  - [https://twitter.com/Inadarkwood/status/1462080574378622992?s=20](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FInadarkwood%2Fstatus%2F1462080574378622992%3Fs%3D20&data=04%7C01%7C%7C35f150c327d04fafb1f508d9ac6ebad4%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637730413840941041%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=cBMbyYlsegcwtAk8ZqdacV%2BV%2BqZKav1v23sSw8%2FWMmk%3D&reserved=0)

Disabled people have become even more isolated and excluded from community life during the pandemic.  At the start much social life and social events were of necessity moved online, and for those disabled people who can use online communication this was beneficial, even increasing participation in some ways.  But since we are all supposed to 'go back to normal' that has changed.  Most events and social occasions are held in person again, yet the risk to clinically vulnerable people has not decreased, if anything it has increased because of the lack of basic public health protections.  So clinically vulnerable disabled people are again excluded.

As well as having their participation in the life of society restricted disabled people's access to health care has been limited because many have avoided doctors or hospitals for the last 20 months thinking (correctly) they could be more at risk from catching Covid in those settings.  Thus chronic conditions which needed treating were left untreated.  In some cases this has led to worsened pain and ill-health.  In some it has led to death.

Disabled people's right to life, to participation in community life and to health care has been significantly reduced by the UK government's failure to protect public health in the coronavirus pandemic.