

# Deaf and disability issues

The Rt Revd Richard Atkinson

## Audio file

[+Richard audio.mp3](#)

## Transcript

00:00:03

Hello, I'm delighted to join you on this conference.

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I'm Richard Atkinson, the Bishop of Bedford, and among my various responsibilities, I am the current chair of CMDDP.

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The Church of England Committee for Ministry of and among deaf and disabled people.

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As it says on the tin, our work is divided between working with the deaf community in the church that distinctive community, many of whom have besle as a recognised language.

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And also working with.

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Those who are disabled, in particular in partnership.

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Focused on the disability task group and also.

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And those disability advisors across our diocese.

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The work for with the death is supported by Jill Behenna, deeply experienced and a very good colleague, whilst at the moment there is nobody specifically working at the national level in relation to disability rhymic Loughrey, some of you will have known him retired over the summer, and at this time.

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Of challenge and change for our church. There are questions about how resourcing will go forward. I'll come back to those in just a moment.

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At the heart.

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Our work

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There is that agenda of.

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Working for a church where all.

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Each and every person can participate, be included, and have their voice.

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It's that vision of a church that is not the church in all its fullness.

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When those who are deaf, those who are who have disability.

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Or whatever.



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Do not have a place, but it's also work that focuses not just on the church but also looks outwards to the world.

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How do we bring that Christian perspective but also real insights from deaf and disabled people into the wider agenda?

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In particular, at the moment we're trying to focus on deliverable and specific areas of work. I just mentioned a few ABT was.

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A key partner in two conferences that took place at Lambeth Palace.

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The earlier one on the whole theme of disability, including issues like access and then more recently, a conference on mental health.

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There are people beginning to think about. How do we take forward further the vocations agenda to all forms of ministry, lay and ordained.

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What are the opportunities? But what are the barriers?

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And what are the things that just should not be there?

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We're looking at.

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How we can support disabled clergy, particularly in relation to leadership. You'll be aware that both leading women in relation to the Ministry and leisure for women and also the Wilfrid Wood programme in relation to those.

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From diverse communities have been doing important work in.

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Their respective fields.

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It's time that there was something similar.

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But distinctive.

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For clergy with who are disabled.

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Other bits of work.

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There is so many. There are so many.

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Impressive, faithful stories.

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Of Christians who are disabled and we're just trying to collect some of those and to find ways of telling that story as part of that church. That is for all.

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There's work of.

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Being involved in consultations, contributing to the latest version on the latest document on church buildings and accessibility. In partnership with the Church Buildings division.



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And as many of you will have seen, the Church of England has revised its website.

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And a number of people have been involved with that.

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And then more generally, what can we do?

00:05:00

To resource.

00:05:02

Those with disability in our church in particular, how do we build a network of lay and ordained that can both be mutually supportive but also a focus for change and challenge as we take?

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These critical agendas forward.

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And so that brings me just to another piece of work which lies behind all of this. Challenged by Malcolm Brown.

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We're thinking about what is the theory of change that we need to inhabit in particular at its heart.

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How do we bring a change to the culture and practise of the church? What is it that will bring that change about? In? What in? As we all know, the Church of England. A complicated, multilayered institution and organisation.

00:06:04

If we get that right.

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Then maybe our church.

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Will be the church that we all desire, where all are truly welcome.

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And have their voice.

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So we can end with invitation. An invitation to say, come and be.

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Part of this work would be good to know who you are. If you're happy to contact me or come through Katie or others.

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So that we can build that network of people either who are disabled or who share concerns for this agenda.

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For together

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But we can make a difference.

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A difference that to my mind.

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Is long overdue.

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I do work quite closely with Bishop Richard, and when he says he wants to hear from you. If you have lived experience of disability and being deaf, he does mean it. So do Google him, find him and get in touch with him.



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