



## **Mayor launches Global Disability Innovation Hub on eve of Rio Paralympic Games**

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, today (Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September) welcomed the launch of the world's first Global Disability Innovation Hub on National Paralympic Day and Liberty Festival in London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The Hub will bring together the world's best academics, disability experts, designers, and communities to improve the lives of disabled people across the world through technology, co-design and innovation.

UCL, recognised globally for its world-class research, will lead the team delivering the Hub in the long term. The Hub will be based at the university's new UCL East campus at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

The Hub opens its doors today with:

- A brand new website ([www.disabilityinnovation.com](http://www.disabilityinnovation.com)) calling on people to join the GDI online community and share ideas and innovations from across the world;
- Over ten live projects already delivering and testing new thinking on disability;
- Plans to launch a Master's programme, sponsored PhDs, and multidisciplinary research projects being developed by academic partners;
- A programme of Hackathons starting in autumn 2016 on topics such as 'how disabled children can be enabled to get to school in Zimbabwe', with Leonard Cheshire Disability
- The inaugural GDI Hub Summit in 2017 in London 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> July, immediately preceding the second biggest para sporting event in the world the IPC World Athletics Championships (14<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> July 2017).

The Hub is a unique partnership led by UCL and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, with Loughborough University London, UAL's London College of Fashion, alongside world-leading partners including Leonard Cheshire Disability, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Sadler's Wells, Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design at the Royal College of Art and a range of disabled peoples' organisations and local and international community groups.

The Hub already has 10 live projects including:

- Investigating the use of 3-D printing technology to produce affordable and personalised prosthetics which could be cheaply produced in low income countries (Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design at the RCA)
- An innovative disability sport project, Motivate East which has so far engaged 86,000 people in new inclusive sports
- Developing creative transport solutions to enable children with disabilities to get to school in rural Zimbabwe (Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre)

- 'Design my Wheels', the Hub's first funded design competition to create the world's first fully customisable, digitally printed wheelchair with open source design with #HackOnWheels
- National Paralympic Day and Liberty Festival, which takes place for the fourth time today and which will form part of the opening celebrations for the 2017 World Athletics Championships in London next summer

London has invested over £10 million to deliver the most successful Paralympic Legacy programme of any host city. This unique Hub will provide a permanent legacy from the Paralympic Games in 2012, finding practical uses for the latest research on disability and innovation through design. It will have a permanent home in the brand new UCL East campus. This culture and education district is being designed to world-leading Inclusive Design Standards, which will be built as part of the new cultural and education district, which opens on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in 2019/ 2020.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "I have pledged to be a Mayor for all Londoners, and will do all I can to make our city a more accessible and inclusive place. I want everyone to be able to make the most of what the capital has to offer - in work, travel, leisure, culture, arts and sport. I am delighted that the Global Disability Innovation Hub is launching here in London, bringing together world-leading experts and communities to make discoveries that will change the lives of people with disabilities around the world. It is fantastic that this will be based at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, which hosted the most successful Paralympic Games of all time and changed perceptions of disability on a global scale."

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE, Paralympian and LLDC Board member said: "What better place to locate the new GDI Hub than on the very Park that staged the most successful Paralympic Games in history? Some of the world's best universities and arts institutions are coming to the Park and their expertise on disability has the potential to deliver life-changing innovation.

"We want more disabled people, NGOs and businesses from across the world to join us our community – online and on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park – to connect with academics, practitioners and designers, to share their ideas and knowledge and make this a truly global space."

Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker, Dean of UCL Engineering, said: "UCL is excited to be leading the team developing the Hub which is such an important legacy of the Paralympic Games and will accelerate the translation of the latest research on disability and innovation into real benefits for disabled people. We are delighted that the new UCL East campus will be the base for such a ground-breaking new centre."

Penny Mordaunt, Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health, said: "This is a fantastic celebration of the Paralympics and their importance in transforming global attitudes to disabled people. The GDI Hub shows just how powerful the legacy of the Games is in sharing knowledge and innovation to improve opportunities for disabled people everywhere.

"The Games are testament to the potential disabled people have and I want to make sure that legacy is carried beyond sports stadia to the wider population."

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**For more information contact the Press Office at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on +44 (0) 20 3734 9010 or email [press@QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk](mailto:press@QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk)**

**Notes to Editors**

**Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park** is a place unlike any other. Spread across 560 acres of beautiful parklands with historic waterways, famous sporting venues and a vibrant arts and events programme. At the Park's centre sits the former Olympic Stadium, a world-class, multi-use venue that will play host to Premier League football, concerts and international athletics and, coming soon, The Slide at the ArcelorMittal Orbit. As the new heart of east London, the Park will provide future homes, jobs and an unrivalled education and cultural district housing Sadler's Wells, V&A East, UAL's London College of Fashion and UCL East.

The **London Legacy Development Corporation** promotes and delivers physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the surrounding area by maximising the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

**Foundation for FutureLondon** was created to work with the Mayor of London to ensure that all Londoners can benefit from the opportunities created by the unique collaboration of world class institutions forming the cultural and education district on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. FFL also coordinates the fundraising efforts for this emblematic project.

For more information visit our website ([QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk](http://QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk)), sign up to our e-newsletter ([QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk/subscribe](http://QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk/subscribe)), follow us on Twitter ([@noordinarypark](https://twitter.com/noordinarypark)) and like us on Facebook ([facebook.com/QueenElizabethOlympicPark](https://facebook.com/QueenElizabethOlympicPark))