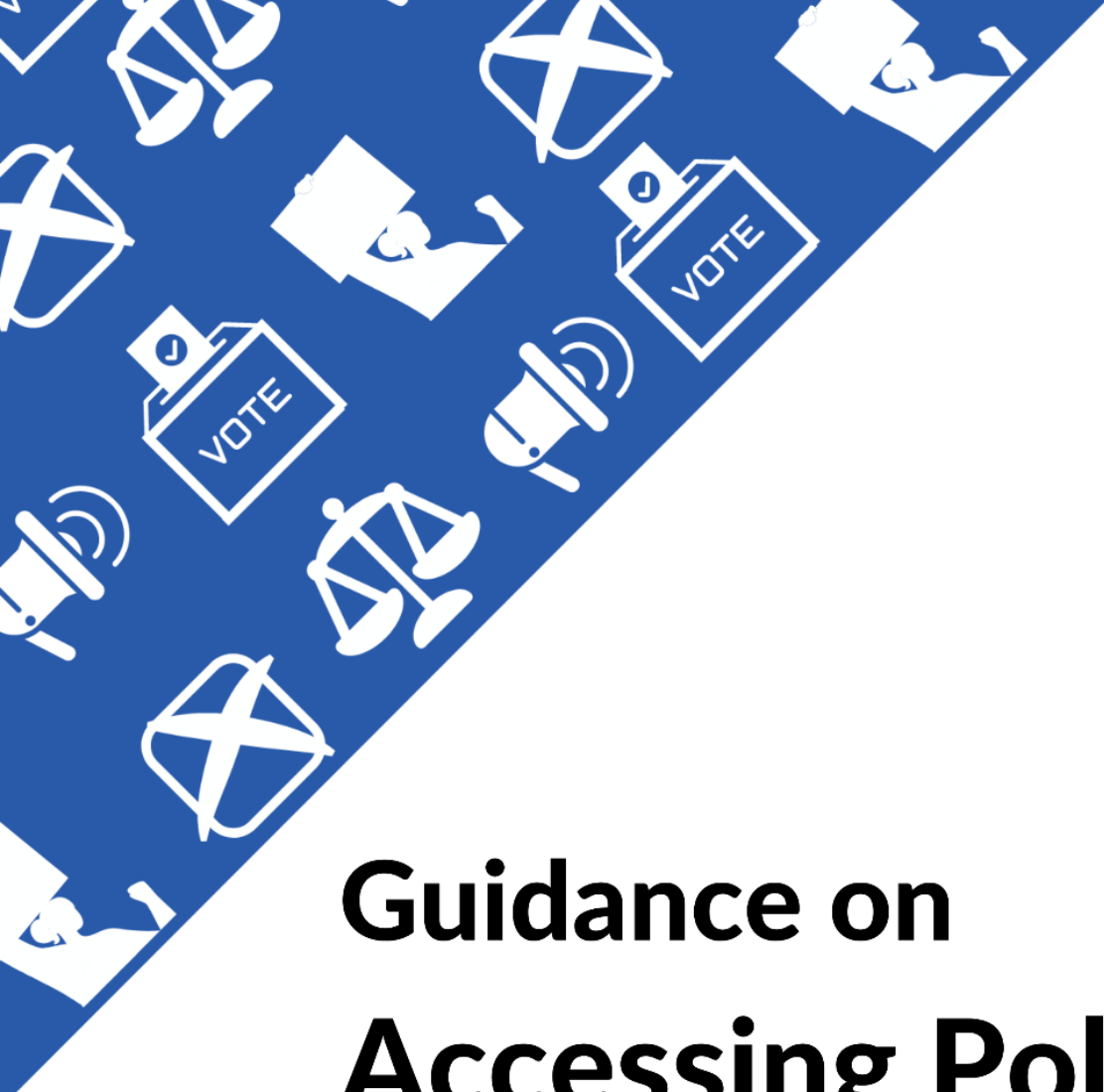




Guidance on Accessing Politics Easy Read Part 1



**Inclusion
Scotland**

Disabled People's Organisation

Our voices ■ Our choices

Access to Politics

Part 1



What are my rights?



What can change to make it easier for me?



Inclusion Scotland made this guide:

- to show disabled people how to get involved in politics.
- to show how to make politics accessible for disabled people.



It is in 8 parts:

1. What are my rights? What can change to make it easier for me?
2. Who represents me?
3. Petitions.
4. How to take part (1).
5. How to take part (2).
6. Tips for campaigning.
7. Election day.
8. Accessibility checklist.



We hope this guide is useful to you.

Get in touch with us at:

civicparticipation@inclusionscotland.org

to tell us what you think of the guide or if you need advice and support.



Rights, adjustments and getting rid of barriers.

What is Disability?



Disabled people can have power to change things.

How we think about ourselves as disabled people depends on how we think about disability.

Disability can be thought about in a medical way or a social way.



The medical model of disability sees a person as disabled because they have an impairment.

For example, a wheelchair user cannot get on a bus because of their impairment.



The medical model sees a disabled person as someone to be cured or treated.



The social model of disability thinks that society should change so it works for everyone.

The bus should be accessible.



An [Easy Read version](#) of the social model is available on the Inclusion Scotland website.

What makes it difficult for disabled people?



One in every five people in Scotland has a disability.

Each disabled person is different.

They have their own characteristics, skills and experiences.



Characteristics describe us as people.

A characteristic is how you see yourself or a group that you feel part of.

For example you are a disabled gay man.



We all have our own identity.

An identity is how you see yourself.

We all have different identities that make us who we are.



Intersectionality is a way to understand how identities work together.

Someone's different identities can mean they have to deal with discrimination – being treated differently because of who they are.



Disabled people are not all the same or need the same things.

People with the same disability might experience different kinds of disability discrimination.



For example, a white wheelchair user may have to face different barriers to a black wheelchair user.

A barrier stops us doing something.



When disabled people have other characteristics, they may experience different kinds of discrimination and barriers.

Know Your Rights



Disabled people have the same rights as anyone else in society.

Disabled people have the right to ask for reasonable adjustments.



Reasonable adjustments are changes made so disabled people have the same choices and chances.

They make sure disabled people have access to buildings and services.

Equality Act 2010



Disabled people are protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people with different characteristics from discrimination.



Protected characteristics under the Equality Act are:

- Age
- Disability



- Gender reassignment (changing your gender from the one you were given at birth)
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race - how we describe our background. People from an ethnic group might have the same language, culture or religion.
- Religion or belief
- Sex – if you see yourself as a woman or a man or in another way.
- Sexual orientation – what kinds of people you love or have sexual or romantic feelings about.

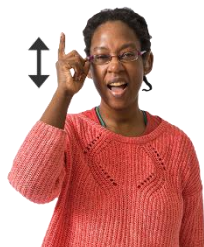
A full [Easy Read version of the Equality Act](#) is available on the UK Government website.

Reasonable Adjustments



Disabled people have the right under the Equality Act to ask for reasonable adjustments to support them to take part in politics.

For example:

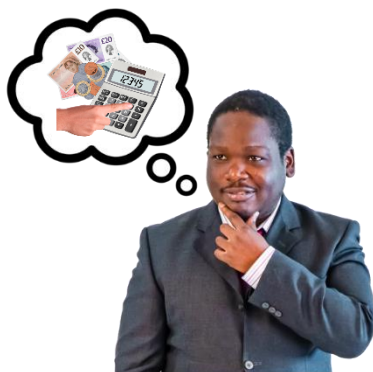


Understand

As a D/deaf person, Rebecca needs reasonable adjustments so she can take part in meetings.



When she goes to political meetings or events her political party makes sure there is palantypist support and BSL interpreters so that D/deaf people can be included.



When deciding if you can provide reasonable adjustments think about:

- If the adjustments will work and stop discrimination.
- Can the changes be made?
- Is there money to make the adjustment?



Under the Equality Act, reasonable adjustments should be made where:

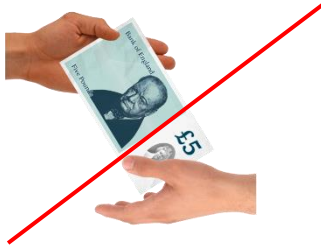
- The way of working is harder for a disabled person.
- There is a physical feature that makes it harder for a disabled person – for example an office that is not wheelchair accessible.
- There is a piece of equipment which would make it easier for a disabled person.

Political parties must make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act.

Local branches or members' groups do not have to provide reasonable adjustments.

This is because smaller groups may not have the money to pay for them.

Reasonable adjustments should be about including people, not just about money and equipment.



Disabled people cannot be asked or made to pay any of the cost of reasonable adjustments.



If a person or organisation does not make reasonable adjustments this is discrimination under the Equality Act.

Your experiences are important.



People decide who to vote for by comparing one candidate's ideas to another.

Your experiences and your characteristics are important.



The experiences of a disabled person may be very different from most people who vote.

Disabled people should feel comfortable to talk about their life as a disabled person, their experiences and what they believe in.

Democracy means all voices and backgrounds are represented.



Disabled candidates may not want to talk about their disability or use their experiences as a disabled person.

This is okay too.

It is up to you to decide what is important.

Support from Inclusion Scotland



We give advice and support to disabled people who are involved or want to be more involved in politics



We want disabled people to be involved in all levels of politics and to use their skills and experiences.



If you are a disabled person we can:

- Talk about how you want to be involved in politics.
- Talk about what has made it difficult for you and what you are worried about.



- Think about what support you need – what reasonable adjustments could help?



- Work with you to make an action plan that you are comfortable with.
- Put you in touch with other disabled activists or a mentor – someone who can support you and give you advice.



We can answer questions about making political events and activities accessible.

We can give advice about:



- Accessible events and meetings
- Communications materials – things like posters and leaflet
- Training.
- The words you use to talk about disabled people and disability issues.
- Following rules and laws like the Equality Act and electoral laws.
- Good ways of working.



Access to Politics Charter



A full Easy Read version of the [Access to Politics Charter](#) is available on the Inclusion Scotland website.

Access to Elected Office Fund



Inclusion Scotland has money from the Scottish Government which is given through the [Access to Elected Office Fund \(Scotland\)](#)



It gives money to support disabled people who want to be councillors or Members of the Scottish Parliament.



In the past, the Fund has paid for transport, personal assistants, communications support, and assistive technology.

The Fund does not cover campaign costs.

To apply for the Access to Elected Office Fund, you must:



- See yourself as disabled as it is described in the Equality Act 2010.
- Want to be picked as a party candidate in an election or as an independent candidate.
- Follow the election rules about being a candidate.



How do I apply for the Access to Elected Office Fund?



E-mail Inclusion Scotland at
civicparticipation@inclusionScotland.org

or phone: 0131 370 6713



We will make an appointment with you to fill out your application.

We can do this in person, by phone or on Skype/Zoom.



We can cover any extra costs of your meeting, including transport and communications support such as a British Sign Language interpreter.



We will ask if you have any access requirements.

Collect any information you feel may be helpful for example, receipts or quotes for transport or assistive technology.



Inclusion Scotland staff will help you apply to the Fund, and to think about the types or support and amount you may need.



We will write a recommendation about your application – this says we support you.



You can ask to see this before it goes to the Decision Panel.

The Panel are the group that decides who gets support.



The Panel will let you know what they have decided in the next month.



If your application is successful, we will send you:

- an award letter
- information about how to look after your award money
- and a copy of our terms and conditions, which we will ask you to sign and send back to us.



If your application is not successful, we will tell you why we made that decision and talk to you about what you could do next.



You may want to change your application and send it in again.

You could appeal the decision.

An appeal means you ask us to look again at your application.