Access to Politics Charter

Inclusion Scotland

Access to Politics Charter

We, the political parties signing this Charter, commit to creating a more accessible, inclusive and representative political system by making the following commitments:

1. We commit to developing and implementing a plan with disabled people that helps create a fair and equal political party, where disabled people and non-disabled people work together as equal partners.

2. We commit to ensuring that the accessibility needs of disabled people are met and cover the cost of this.

3. We commit to providing high-quality disability inclusion training. This will be designed and delivered by disabled people.

4. We commit to listening to disabled people, carefully considering their views and acting on their suggestions.

5. We commit to having clear information for disabled people about how they can get involved in politics.

Inclusion Scotland

6. We commit to communicating in a way that is accessible for disabled people.

7. We commit to increasing representation of disabled people by actively removing barriers and encouraging disabled people to apply for and take on roles within our political party.

8. We commit to working with disabled people to develop, publish and put into practice a shared commitment to inclusion across our political plan.

9. We commit to supporting and implementing the Equal Representation Charter with the goal of ensuring all marginalised people are included in Scottish politics.

Disabled people should be at the heart of everything you do to put the Charter into practice. The commitments above are supported by the guidance notes, which explain each commitment in detail and provide practical guidance on how to achieve them.

Guidance Notes

Background

We know that over a quarter (1 in 4) of people in Scotland are disabled. The actual number of people who are disabled is likely higher than this.

- Disabled people
- Rest of the population

The number of disabled people working in politics does not match the number of disabled people who live in Scotland. For example, only 7% of Members of Scottish Parliament (MSPs) are known to be disabled people, although the actual number is probably higher. This is an improvement as of the last election, but there is still more work to do.

It is important that people working in politics represent the people they are working for. This will improve the lives of disabled people in Scotland because people working in politics will think about how their decisions will affect disabled people. They will understand more of the challenges that disabled people can face, and what can be done to make things better.

This Charter is about removing barriers and making it easier for disabled people to get into politics – both as party members and as people working and volunteering in parties.

Introduction

Inclusion Scotland published its first Access to Politics Charter in 2018. It was co-produced with disabled people. The 2018 Charter sets out the promises of political parties to support disabled people to get involved in politics.

Things have improved in the eight years since the last Charter was published, and there are now more disabled MSPs.

This new 2026 Access to Politics Charter builds on that excellent work, and aims to hold political parties accountable to the promises that they make.

Designing the 2026 Access to Politics Charter

To design the 2026 Access to Politics Charter, we went through three main stages:

Desktop research

We looked at information online about disabled people in Scotland and how they are involved in politics.

Stakeholder interviews

We interviewed people involved in making other Charters about disabled people's involvement in politics, both in Scotland and other nations.

Coproduction sessions

We worked with 45 disabled people over four months to think about how to build on the 2018 Charter and what was important to disabled people in Scotland now.

The Charter is aimed at people working in all the main political parties in Scotland. It aims to remove barriers to getting involved in politics at every level for disabled people in Scotland, through:

- Better communication
- Accessibility
- Co-production
- Training
- Information about getting involved.

It also aims to have more accountability – making sure the Charter is making a difference, and being able to keep track of this, with disabled people able to give feedback.

The Commitments

1. **We commit to developing and implementing a plan with disabled people that helps create a fair and equal political party, where disabled people and non-disabled people work together as equal partners.**

Why this commitment matters

Parties need to listen to people with lived experience and disabled people should be included at every level of party politics.

See the **Meaningful Engagement** and **Co-production Guidance.**

Practical action points that will ensure you meet the commitment

Have a plan – or policy – about how you will make sure you are:

- Listening to a range of people with lived experience of being disabled – including people with higher support needs, as well as carers
- Including disabled people when you make decisions and plans and consulting further if a diversity of lived experience is not met by your party membership

How you can evidence this commitment

Publish information every 6 months about how disabled people have been included.

Questions you should ask yourselves

How many disabled people are involved at each level of your party's activities?

What processes are in place for listening to disabled people and including disabled people in decision-making?

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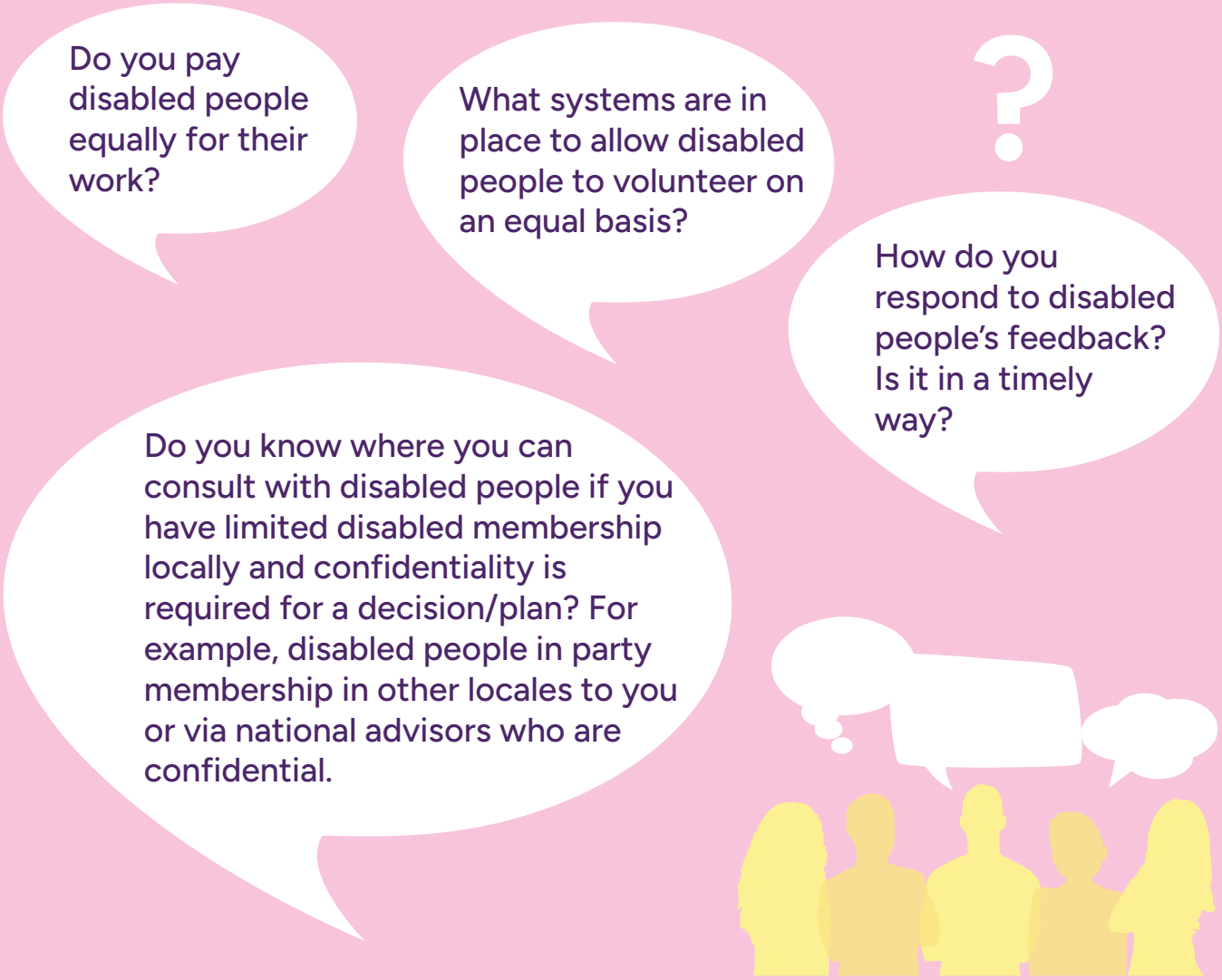


2. We commit to ensuring that the accessibility needs of disabled people are met and cover the cost of this.

Why this commitment matters

For disabled people to be involved in politics, they need to have their accessibility needs met. This includes covering the costs of reasonable adjustments.

Accessibility is about removing barriers that prevent disabled people from participating fully and equally. This includes physical environments, communication, technology and ways of working. Accessibility should be considered from the outset rather than as an afterthought. Some accessibility needs are individual so while having generic good practice (see later) an individualised approach is also needed. Accessibility should be considered from the outset rather than as an afterthought. See the guidance on Reasonable Adjustments and Commitment 6 for more information about meeting accessibility needs.

Practical action points that will ensure you meet the commitment

Make sure that there is accessibility support for political roles and ensure that there are different ways for disabled people to get involved. One example is offering hybrid, online, and on site options. This will come with other access considerations, such as the length of the meeting.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, opportunities to engage were moved online, and this was more accessible for many disabled people who are unable to attend on site events. Other disabled people will face barriers to digital access. For this reason, it is important to consider the format of engagement opportunities.

Some further suggestions to support accessibility:

- Recognising that needs can change and asking about accessibility needs isn't a one-off conversation. See guidance on Avoiding Assumptions.

- Facilities which support disabled access such as lifts and disabled toilets should be well maintained and checked regularly to ensure they remain in good working order. Disabled toilets should remain uncluttered and never used for storage. Venues used for meetings and events should be step-free and have accessible parking and, where possible, Changing Places bathrooms.

- Recognising that some people have seating requirements that will need to be met in the long term for meetings. For example, a riser recliner or a seat with arms and booster cushion.

- Communication materials should be available in a range of accessible formats, including Easy Read, audio and British Sign Language (BSL). Communication should also support people who rely on lipreading, and information should be accessible for people with dyslexia. Digital and social media accessibility should also be considered.

- When hosting events online, the needs of disabled participants should be carefully considered. Regular breaks should be included and live captions turned on.

- It is always worth asking in advance and/or at the beginning of a meeting whether any attendees have any unmet access requirements that they need addressing to take part.

How you can evidence this commitment

Demonstrate how you are meeting people's accessibility needs and what reasonable adjustments you are providing.

Show how meeting these needs has supported disabled people to be involved in your party's activities.

Questions you should ask yourselves

3. **We commit to providing high-quality Disability Inclusion training. This will be designed and delivered by disabled people.**

High-quality disability inclusion training should be designed and delivered with disabled people at its heart. Trainers should have appropriate skills, knowledge and experience of delivering training. It's important that the training is firmly grounded in lived experience and it is recommended that at least 50% of the training team are disabled people.

The training should cover the topics outlined in this guidance, be practical and action-focused, and be delivered by trainers with appropriate knowledge, skills and experience in disability inclusion. We recognise that this type of training may be described in different ways, such as disability equality training and disability equity training.

Political parties should consider whether their established disabled members' groups could contribute to the design and delivery of disability inclusion training. These groups bring valuable lived experience and knowledge of the specific barriers disabled people face within political parties and could lead or co-deliver the training. Where they are involved in delivery, the same expectations around quality, knowledge, skills and lived experience should apply.

Training should be regularly reviewed and updated with disabled people to ensure it remains relevant and effective. The purpose of the training should be to build the knowledge, confidence and practical skills needed to create lasting cultural change, rather than simply raising awareness.

Why this commitment matters

Disability inclusion training is an important part of creating a political culture where disabled people feel they can fully participate and feel valued. Effective training helps build understanding and gives participants the knowledge and skills to recognise and remove barriers and create an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone.

By signing and committing to the Access to Politics Charter, you are recognising the importance of proactive provision of disability and inclusion training which is ongoing for all elected officers, staff and party members.

Practical action points that will ensure you meet the commitment

Your disability inclusion training should:

- Be designed and delivered by disabled people or organisations with lived experience and expertise. See the guidance on **Meaningful Engagement and Co-production** for more information on valuing lived experience.
- Be part of the induction process for all new staff, volunteers, candidates and elected representatives and there should be regular refresher training to help reinforce learning and consider any changes in legislation, policy and good practice. Training should never be approached as a one-off, tick box exercise.
- Be designed through learning from other training to make it as useful as possible.
- Be tested to make sure it is working well.

Training content

Topics that could be included within a Disability Inclusion session:

- Understanding what disability is, it's impact and the importance of recognising both visible and invisible impairments.
- Identifying respectful language and the importance of disabled people leading the conversations around language
- Responding appropriately to requests for reasonable adjustments and recognising the importance of asking what people need on a regular basis
- How to identify and remove barriers that disabled people face so that meetings, events, campaigning and decision-making are as accessible as possible.
- Explanation of The Social Model of Disability and its role in breaking down barriers that disabled people face.
- Legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010
- Developing confidence to respectfully communicate and interact with disabled people.

Accessibility and flexibility of training

It's important that the training provided is offered in a range of formats and is as flexible as possible to maximise participation. Training may be offered face-to-face, online and hybrid delivery and recorded materials should be offered where this is appropriate. Training should be as accessible as possible and planned in line with the guidance on **Reasonable Adjustments.**

Accessibility should always be considered and implemented from the outset and should never be "added on" only when a participant requests it.

It should be recognised that training as a stand-alone exercise does not create an inclusive environment. A rigorous training process should be supported by inclusive policies, supportive leadership and a willingness to continuously review and improve practice. It should form just one part of a wider organisational commitment to improving access and **Creating an Inclusive Culture.**

How you can evidence this commitment

Demonstrate that the training is a key part of onboarding for all new hires and is part of the induction process for those running for elected office. Everyone should take the training, and you should keep a record of everyone who has completed it. You should report on the numbers of party staff and volunteers who have taken the training.

Seek feedback from disabled and non-disabled colleagues on the difference the training has made.

Demonstrate the changes made based on support and advice of a lived experience group.

Questions you should ask yourselves

Does the content include the suggested areas laid out in the guidance notes?

Has the training been designed and delivered by disabled trainers with lived experience?

Is the training part of the induction process for all new staff, volunteers, candidates and elected representatives?

Is the training delivery flexible and accessible?

Are there regular opportunities for refresher training to help reinforce learning and consider any changes in legislation, policy and good practice?

4. We commit to listening to disabled people, carefully considering their views and acting on their suggestions.

Why this commitment matters

Political parties should respond to disabled people when they challenge the work that they do.

Disabled people often invest significant time and effort in sharing their experiences and challenging barriers. It is important that political parties listen carefully to this feedback, respond in a timely and respectful way, and take action where improvements are needed. This helps ensure that decisions better reflect the needs and experiences of disabled people.

Practical action points that will help you meet this commitment

- Develop a clear process for receiving and responding to feedback, concerns and complaints from disabled people.
- Explain how feedback will be considered, when changes will be made and how people will be informed about the outcome.
- Set out how you will communicate changes, for example by responding directly to individuals or publishing updates.
- Be clear about the timescales for acknowledging and responding to feedback and complaints.

How you can evidence this commitment

Make the process for responding to feedback and complaints available to members, or available to the public where applicable.

Report on how you are responding to feedback, and the changes you are making.

Questions you should ask yourselves

5. We commit to having clear information for disabled people about how they can get involved in politics.

Why this commitment matters

Disabled people need information on the role of politicians and other people working in parties, including information about the process for running for office and the barriers that might exist for disabled people as well as possible routes through them.

It is important to be able to imagine what different roles in politics might be like, and to be able to plan for any reasonable adjustments that might be needed. It is also important to be able to see disabled people as role models.

Practical action points that will ensure you meet the commitment

- Provide clear, accessible information about how disabled people can get involved in politics, including standing for election, campaigning and other political roles. Information should be written in plain language, avoid unnecessary jargon and be available in a range of accessible formats.
- Clearly explain who disabled people can contact for advice and support about getting involved.
- Share stories and practical examples from disabled people working in politics to help others understand what political roles involve and see what is possible.
- Highlight disabled role models to increase the visibility of disabled people in politics and encourage others to get involved.

How you can evidence this commitment

Share this information publicly, including through websites, social media and through talking to people.

Report on what information you have shared, and how this has made a difference for disabled people wanting to get involved.

Questions you should ask yourselves

6. We commit to communicating in a way that is accessible for disabled people.

Why this commitment matters

If disabled people cannot communicate in politics, they cannot be involved. Adapt your communication to meet the needs of disabled people you work with. It is not always possible - and should not be the responsibility of a disabled person - to adapt how they communicate.

Practical action points that will ensure you meet the commitment

- Plan communication from the outset and tailor it to people's communication needs. Provide reasonable adjustments where needed. See the guidance on **Reasonable Adjustments** and **Creating an Inclusive Culture** for further information.

- Use accessible language by writing in clear, straightforward English, avoiding unnecessary jargon and acronyms, explaining technical terms where needed, and structuring information so it is easy to read and understand.

- Ensure meetings and events are accessible by considering communication needs, providing live captions where possible and scheduling regular breaks.

- Provide information in a range of accessible formats, including Easy Read, British Sign Language (BSL), plain English, Braille, large print and audio, and in alternative languages where appropriate.

- Provide slides / questions links, etc., ahead of time. If you think there might be last minute changes to a talk, let people know but still share so people can familiarise themselves with the topic.

- Make digital and social media content accessible.

Where meetings or materials include potentially distressing topics, provide a clear content warning in advance so participants can decide how they wish to engage. Allow people to step away or take breaks when needed without feeling uncomfortable.

How you can evidence this commitment

Show how you are seeking to understand the communication needs of the disabled people working in or with the party, and the communication needs of people interested in politics. You should show how this is embedded into every aspect of political participation – from recruitment and campaigning to meetings, events, training and decision-making.

Report on the ways that you have published information in a range of formats.

Questions you should ask yourselves

7. We commit to increasing representation of disabled people by actively removing barriers and encouraging disabled people to apply for and take on roles within our political party.

Why this commitment matters

Many disabled people do not know that political involvement is 'for them' or know how to get involved.

Increasing representation requires meaningful engagement with disabled people and removing barriers to participation. See the guidance on **Meaningful Engagement** and **Co-production** and **Creating an Inclusive Culture.**

Practical action points that will ensure you meet the commitment

Put a plan in place to encourage more disabled people who want to be involved in politics to be able to get roles.

For example, you should go to disabled people's groups to talk about how to become involved in politics.

Voluntary work done in politics can take a lot of energy, and you should have ways for disabled people to be able to do this work in a way that works for them. You should value different forms of activism (not just door-knocking).

How you can evidence this commitment

Publish data on how you are working with disabled people to support them to get roles, as well as the numbers of disabled people working for the party.

Questions you should ask yourselves

8. We commit to working with disabled people to develop, publish and put into practice a shared commitment to inclusion across our political plan.

Why this commitment matters

We want this Charter to make a real difference, as soon as possible. We also want to be able to check what difference it is making.

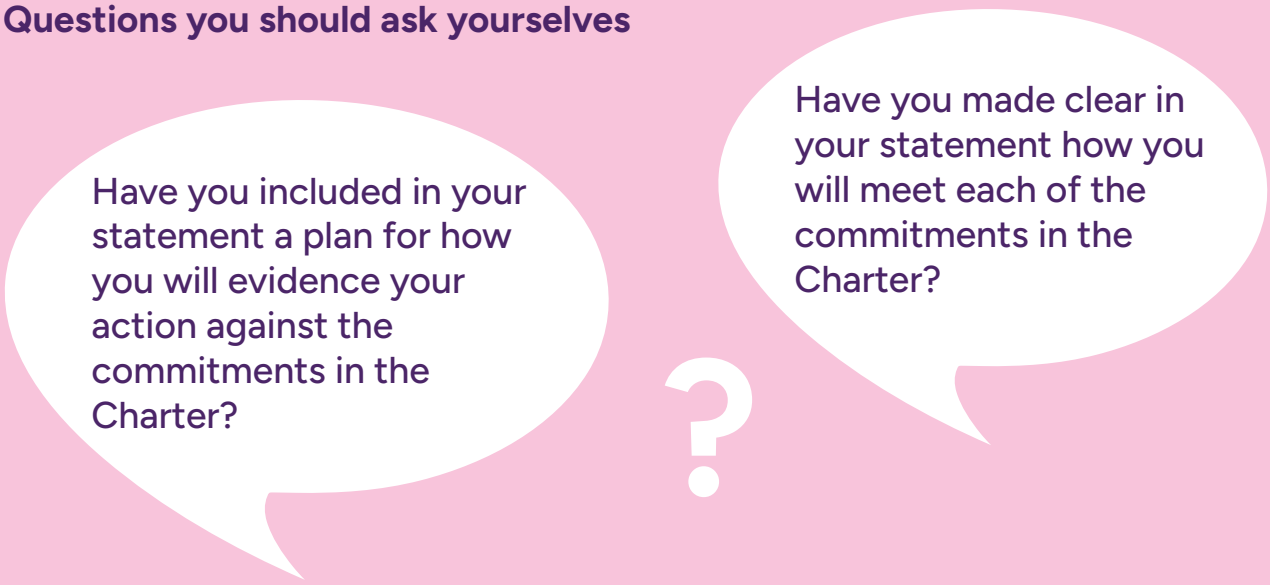
Practical action points that will ensure you meet the commitment

- Publish a statement outlining your commitment to increasing disabled people's participation in politics.
- Explain how you will put the Charter commitments into practice.
- Describe how you will create a more inclusive and accessible political environment.
- Signpost to relevant policies, strategies or action plans that support this work.

How you can evidence this commitment

Make this statement publicly available, for example by sharing on your website.

Questions you should ask yourselves



9. We commit to supporting and implementing the Equal Representation Charter with the goal of ensuring all marginalised people are included in Scottish politics.

Why this commitment matters

Many people experience more than one form of marginalisation, meaning they face multiple barriers to participating in politics. Improving representation requires organisations to recognise these intersecting experiences and work collaboratively to remove barriers.

The Equal Representation Charter complements the Access to Politics Charter by providing a wider framework for improving representation across all underrepresented groups. Together, the two Charters support a more inclusive and representative political system.

Practical action points that will ensure you meet the commitment

- Sign up to the Equal Representation Charter and implement the commitments that are relevant to your party.
- Embed the principles of intersectionality in your work and collaborate with others to improve representation across all underrepresented groups.

How you can evidence this commitment

Evidence and publicise your party's commitment to the Equal Representation Charter, recognising its importance as a framework for improving representation and participation across Scotland's political system.

Questions you should ask yourselves

How can you address barriers to engagement experienced by marginalised groups within disabled communities?

How can you ensure that your work with disabled people improves representation and participation for all disabled people?

Have you considered how your work around access to politics for disabled people will impact people experiencing more than one type of marginalisation, for example disabled people who are also part of LGBTQ+ communities or Global Majority communities?

Further guidance on embedding commitments into your party

Meaningful Engagement and Co-production:

A key theme throughout the Charter is listening to disabled people, learning from their lived experience and taking meaningful action to remove barriers. This means involving disabled people as equal partners from the earliest stages of planning through to implementation and review, using co-production wherever possible. Disabled people should have meaningful opportunities to influence decisions that affect their lives.

Lived experience provides insight into how policies, decisions and services affect disabled people in everyday life. It helps organisations understand the real barriers people face and develop more inclusive policies, services and ways of working.

Meaningful co-production means:

- involving disabled people before decisions have been made
- sharing power and decision-making between disabled and non-disabled people
- valuing disabled people's time and expertise by paying them appropriately for their involvement
- ensuring a diverse range of disabled people are involved, recognising that experiences and access needs differ.

Understanding Disability and Inclusion

By signing and committing to the Access to Politics Charter, it is important to understand the term “disability” and its scope. The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as:

> “A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

Physical or mental impairments include a range of impairments / conditions – both visible and invisible conditions including physical / mobility impairments, sensory and learning impairments, mental health conditions, long-term health

conditions and neurodivergence. To be defined as disability under the Equality Act, such conditions / impairments typically have a significant impact upon the individual's life and are expected to last for 12 months or more. Disability will impact upon the individual's ability to complete everyday tasks which may include communicating, travelling, reading, concentrating and interacting with others.

While the Equality Act provides a legal definition of disability, it's important to remember that disabled people are not a single group. Our experiences, the barriers that we face, and access requirements vary significantly between individuals. Effective inclusion treats everyone as an individual and requires recognising and responding to these different needs and avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

Avoiding Assumptions

It's important to remember that disabled people are the experts in our own conditions, barriers, experiences and access needs. Whilst understanding disability is important, it is equally important not to make assumptions about an individual's ability based on their impairment, and rather to ask the individual what would support them.

Assumptions can create additional and unnecessary barriers and may discourage disabled people from participating in political activities.

Examples include:

Assuming a disabled person cannot take on a leadership role or stand for election

Making assumptions about the access needs of an individual before asking them what they need

Assuming everyone who has the same condition, also has the same access needs

Assuming that a disabled person will tell you about their access needs when the individual may not have the confidence to do so

Speaking to a support worker, carer or family member rather than speaking directly to the disabled person

The Social Model of Disability

The Access to Politics Charter is rooted in the Social Model of Disability, which was developed by disabled people as an alternative to the Medical Model. The Medical Model views disability as a problem within the person which needs to be fixed, cured or adapted to.

The Social Model of Disability flips this idea – stating that people are not disabled by their conditions but rather by the barriers that society puts in their way. These barriers can be physical, attitudinal or systemic and include assumptions, poor communication and policies which fail to address the needs of everyone. When we design environments, systems and cultures which work for everyone, nobody is disabled by them.

In politics, some of the barriers may be created for disabled people through:

- Inaccessible venues being used for meetings and events
- Failing to provide campaign materials in accessible formats
- Meetings solely online without captions
- Inflexible processes and policies
- Negative and discriminatory attitudes
- Inappropriate pace (too slow or too fast) or length of meetings and processes

Reasonable Adjustments

By signing and committing to the Access to Politics Charter, it is vital that political parties understand their duty to take reasonable steps to avoid disabled people being put at a substantial disadvantage.

Reasonable adjustments are changes or adaptions that remove or reduce barriers experienced by disabled people, ensuring that they can participate on an equal basis to others. Under the Equality Act 2010, organisations have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage.

Reasonable adjustments are not about giving disabled people an unfair advantage or providing special treatment. Their purpose is to remove barriers and by doing so allow disabled people to participate on an equal basis with others. By recognising and responding to individual access requirements,

reasonable adjustments help to create a level playing field where everyone has the opportunity to contribute, engage and perform to the best of their ability. In the context of politics, this means ensuring that disabled people can participate in meetings, campaigning, decision-making and leadership roles without being disadvantaged by avoidable barriers.

In politics, some reasonable adjustments may include:

- Offering both on site and online options for meetings and events wherever possible. Political parties should be committed to making on site events as accessible as possible – by considering physical access requirements, seating and room layout, communication support and other reasonable adjustments. Whilst online participation may be suitable and more convenient for some, it should not be treated as the default option as it could lead to further exclusion or marginalisation. Disabled people should be given a genuine choice about how they participate which is based on their individual access needs and preferences

- Ensuring all materials for meetings, events and campaigns are provided in alternative, accessible formats such as Easy Read

- Offering alternative options for campaigning such as Community events and hustings as opposed to door-to-door canvassing

- Using accessible venues and language

- Allowing support workers and personal assistants to attend with individuals

There is no standard list of reasonable adjustments. Effective adjustments are developed through discussion with the individual and should reflect their specific access requirements. Many adjustments are often very simple as well as being low cost. The majority of adjustments are also beneficial to everyone, not just the individual that they are intended to support.

Creating an Inclusive Culture

Policies and procedures set the expectations for how an organisation will be inclusive and accessible. However, it's the culture of an organisation which will determine how inclusive it really is.

By signing up to the Access to Politics Charter, your party is committing to creating an environment where individual disabled people can participate fully and confidently. This means recognising that accessibility is everyone's responsibility. Every member, volunteer, candidate, elected representative and member of staff should feel empowered to identify barriers, ask questions and take action to improve accessibility. Inclusion should not rest solely with one designated individual or team. It's also important that disabled people are listened to as individuals and not treated as a single group or as statistics. Everyone should be encouraged to bring their own experience, perspectives and expertise and these should be valued and reflected in decision-making.

Creating an inclusive culture is also about embedding inclusion into daily practice, not just as a one-off event or awareness day. It involves regularly reviewing that your policies and procedures work for everyone, listening to the experiences of disabled people and involving them in decision-making, acting on their feedback and celebrating examples of good practice across your political party.

Some suggestions for creating a truly accessible and inclusive culture:

Build relationships with disabled people based on trust, respect and openness. Taking the time to develop person-centred relationships helps people feel valued, listened to and confident that their views will influence decisions.

Create Access Champions across the party who are responsible for keeping accessibility on the agenda, encourage inclusive thinking and act as a source of support and advice.

Demonstrate leadership commitment by ensuring senior leaders actively champion accessibility and regularly communicate that it is a core organisational value.

Before making decisions or introducing new policies, consider how they may affect disabled people. Decisions should be co-produced with disabled people from the outset, ensuring they have a genuine opportunity to influence outcomes before decisions are made. Disabled people should be paid for their time and expertise.

Establish a lived experience advisory group. Political parties could consider creating a lived experience group of disabled people who can provide ongoing advice and feedback on accessibility and inclusion. This group could respond to questions via email, participate in online discussions, attend meetings where appropriate, and/or review policies, campaigns and communications before they are finalised. Regular engagement helps ensure that decisions are informed by lived experience and that accessibility remains embedded in everyday practice, rather than being considered only at specific consultation points.

A lived experience advisory group should include a diverse group of disabled people with a range of experiences of marginalisation, both as disabled people and as members of other marginalised communities. You should consider intersectionality as a core part of this work, in line with the expectations laid out in the Equal Representation Charter (see commitment 9 and guidance notes).

Ensure disabled people lead conversations about disability language. Language evolves over time and may vary between individuals and communities. Political parties should use respectful, inclusive language informed by disabled people and disabled people's organisations, rather than relying on outdated terminology or making assumptions about what is appropriate. Disability inclusion training should provide guidance on current terminology, while recognising that the most important principle is to respect an individual's own preferences.

Encourage open and regular conversations about accessibility so that it becomes part of the culture to discuss access requirements, ask questions and suggest improvements without fear of judgement. It should also be remembered that many reasonable adjustments make life easier for everyone, not just disabled people. Accessibility should be built into planning from the outset, not an add on as an afterthought. It will then become an automatic stage of planning meetings, events and other political activities.

Celebrate good practice! Recognise individuals and teams who demonstrate inclusive practices and encourage them to be adopted across the party. Share examples of good practice as part of your disability inclusion training.

Ask for and encourage feedback from disabled members, candidates, staff and volunteers. Use the feedback to make improvements and review policies and procedures on a regular basis.

Give everyone the confidence to challenge ableism and discriminatory behaviour. It should be made clear that everyone is responsible for creating a respectful and inclusive culture.

Monitoring and Accountability

Political parties should be able to demonstrate how they are putting the Charter Commitments into practice. This could include sharing examples of action taken, progress made and the impact of those actions.

For the 2026 Access to Politics Charter to really make a difference, we need political parties to be accountable. This means

- being able to track how they are making progress with the commitments they have made
- being able to share this progress with the public
- having a review process in place
- having a plan of how to respond when commitments are not met, and how to keep getting better.

Political parties should develop an implementation plan within 3 months of signing the Charter. Political parties should set realistic timescales for implementing the Charter commitments and agree to regularly review and report on their progress every 12 months.

To do this, take the following steps:

1) Collect evidence of how you are performing against each of the commitments in the Charter

2) Have a plan for how you will internally review your progress.

3) Plan for how you will address any areas where you are not meeting your commitments. You should explain the reasons for failure so that these can be worked on and improved, and plan for how you will deal with these issues and get better. You should communicate, in accessible formats, the process for disabled people to raise concerns about commitments that have not been met

4) Plan for how you will highlight and praise progress and participation – for example using photo evidence (with permission)

5) Share this evidence, review and plan a report that is publicly available every 12 months, potentially with a report at your annual conference. Progress and areas that still need more work should be published using mainstream media and social media. Inclusion Scotland will provide a template to support each party to produce a short, quantifiable summary of progress.

6) Work with a disabled people's lived experience group (such as a DPO or a party's disability group) to provide independent oversight of the political parties' activities in relation to their commitments. The group will receive and respond to feedback and to enable continuous improvement, using a reflective model like Ripple Effect Mapping to explore the complex impacts of the Charter. You should consider how people who are not able to attend live meetings can still be involved, for example by watching or listening to recordings and providing feedback afterwards. Seek multiple perspectives, for example through work with DPOs, local authority access panels, and other groups.

Inclusion Scotland

Nothing About Us Without Us.

www/inclusionscotland.org