

Access to Politics Charter: Questionnaire

1. We shall produce and publish a statement outlining how we will support disabled people's participation in every aspect of our activities.

(a) If your statement has been published, please provide a link and/or other details of publication.

Work in progress

(b) If your statement has been published, has it been made in accessible formats? (Large Print, Audio, Easy Read, etcetera.)

(c) If your statement has not been published please provide an update on your progress with this, including (if available) the intended publication date.

The statement forms part of a wider workstream involving new guidance to fit with the recently adopted (October 2018) party constitution. We would seek to make progress on this prior to our Annual Conference in October 2019

2. We shall support and resource a disabled members' group within our party.

(a) Does your party have a disabled members' group? If so:

- i. When was it established?**
- ii. How is it resourced?**
- iii. How is it represented in the party's governance?**
- iv. How does the disabled members' group inform party policy on issues affecting disabled people?**

Yes.

- i. The Disabled Members Group was established in 2016
- ii. Affiliate group funding available, plus central funding of specific items and events
- iii. The group will be represented on the National Executive Committee, as well as a Disabled Members Convener being elected to the NEC as at October 2019.
- iv. The DMG has given Disability Equality Training to all branches, which are the main drivers of policies. The DMG also now has the capacity to write its own resolutions without needing to go through branches. The Equalities Convener currently sits on SOAC, and has outlined proposals for specific consultation on Impact of resolutions in the future.

(b) If your party does not yet have a disabled members' group, please outline the steps you are taking to establish this.

3. We shall commit to positive and proactive provision of disability equality training to elected officers, staff and party members.

(a) Please outline your provision of disability equality training (DET) for elected officers, including any changes or updates you have made since signing the Charter.

(b) Please outline your provision of DET for party staff, including any changes or updates you have made since signing the Charter.

(c) Please outline your provision of DET for branches and party members, including any changes or updates you have made since signing the Charter.

a) The Disabled Members Group wrote a DET programme which has been delivered to all branches in Scotland. This document will also form part of the overhauled mySNP site which is currently in development, so that all party members at every level can access it at any time.

We are also in the process of renegotiating vetting procedures which we intend will include Equalities Training, including DET, at that stage, so all elected officials have gone through it.

4. We shall ensure that the language we use about 'disability' recognises it as a societal issue with societal solutions.

(a) Does the language your party uses incorporate the social model of disability?

(b) Would you party staff and elected officers benefit from training on the social model of disability?

Yes, we use the social model of disability when we discuss disability. We are still working on adjusting some of the language, particularly in elected office, where person-first language has historically been drilled into people working in the public sector.

The social model makes up most of the DET we have presented to people in the party, but there is always room for more detailed discussion for party staff and elected officers, who need more specific insights.

5. We shall investigate alternative means of participation such as remote presence and internal digital voting.

(a) Has your party introduced remote presence, digital and/or proxy voting for internal party meetings?

E-voting is available at national level, and we are exploring further developments to allow for greater remote access to policy-making forums etc, as well as encouraging local branches to offer alternative means of participation. We have ensured that remote presence is available for NEC, SOAC and other national party meetings, whether through phone conference or Skype.

(b) Have you undertaken research into further alternative means of participation, including but not limited to methods to expand the disabled people's accessibility to voting during internal elections?

We continue to look at innovations in the field and the role of the remote access to participate and vote at all levels of the party. Because internal elections usually happen at Conferences, we are hoping to highlight the capacity for people to be delegates even if they cannot attend in person, and therefore to have the right to vote. Any party-wide internal elections are already done through digital voting.

We are also looking into guidance for branches for better agenda protocols, so that people who cannot attend can still make their voices heard in the debates, and will continue to look into ways to help branches offer digital voting.

6. We shall voluntarily publish data on protected characteristics of our candidates in line with section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 for all elections, including Scottish local authority elections.

(a) Does your party currently publish statistics on the protected characteristics of its candidates? If not, has it set a date and method for doing so?

We have not previously published figures in respect of all protected characteristics but will do so at future elections.

7. We shall investigate job-sharing for internal elected roles and for elected public office.

(a) Are there any internal elected roles where your party permits and/or practices job sharing?

At local level we are aware of job-sharing for elected roles, but that has not been pursued at national level to date.

(b) Are there any plans to expand the option of job sharing within your party?

There are no immediate plans to make the required constitutional changes to allow for this, but this will be demand-led. There have been some questions

about it, and we have recommended that an internal resolution is submitted to allow for the debate on the change, but this has not yet come in.

(c) Have you undertaken research into job sharing for internal elected roles and for elected public office?

We continue to monitor experiences of this elsewhere, although for elected public office we recognise there have been court opinions on this already. Through our engagement with the Electoral Commission we are open to continuing discussion on the viability of this.

8. We shall actively support and encourage disabled people to stand for elected office and explore mechanisms that ensure the election of a representative number of disabled candidates.

(a) Does your party have an internal process and/or campaign to encourage disabled members to put themselves forward for selection?

Our Disabled Members Group acts as the main driver for encouraging more disabled members to come forward to seek selection. Everyone on the Candidate Assessment Panels has been given guidance on how to account for biases in the selection process, eg. To ask how people have been involved and give equal weighting to online

activism and door-knocking, instead of seeing that as the only measure of commitment. As that filters into branches, we hope to see more branches actively looking for people to put forward for selection. We are also at the beginning of producing a campaign to encourage disabled members to apply, which will focus on both the wider membership and give guidance to branches on what to look for. We hope this will be live by the end of the year.

(b) Does your party provide candidate training and mentorship, either for disabled members specifically, or in an accessible format for all members?

We are in the process of rejuvenating our mentoring programme to encourage members from all under-represented groups to come forward as potential candidates. Through the work of the DMG and relevant office bearers we hope to see increased opportunities for candidate training. We are drafting a document for MP and MSP offices about ways to make staffing offices accessible, including possibly looking at job-sharing and part-time work, since having worked in an MP/MSP office is a major factor in whether a person ends up being elected.

(c) Does your party promote the Access to Elected Office Fund (Scotland) in your party materials, including in accessible formats, and in communications with members and staff?

We make all members aware of the Access to Elected Office fund and direct potential candidates towards that. Our new constitution includes a similar fund for participation in party activity that may involve costs to allow equal access to participation.