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.
   (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.

   At our Conference in March 2019 we will be asking members to formally adopt the recommendations of our Democracy review carried out through 2017 and 2018. As this must first be formally adopted by our Scottish Labour Conference, we have not yet published a statement.

   Once passed by our conference, we will publish a statement taking into account the recommendations of the review and we will - as we do with our manifesto in each election – strive to provide as many accessible versions of the statement as possible, including Large text, audio and easy read. Any printed copies will be on untreated paper.

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?

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

Our Disabled Members Network was set up in June 2014 in Scotland. The group meet regularly with the General Secretary to discuss accessibility within the party structure and how to engage with disabled members and disabled people within the wider community.

In terms of representation in Party governance, the Party is in the process of rolling out the recommendations of our Democracy Review aimed at increasing access, participation and representation of marginalised members. The recommendations of this review will be put forward to Scottish Labour Conference in March 2019 to be formally adopted by delegates.

The recommendations of this review relating to disabled members are as follows:

- *A radically reformed Disabled Members structure with all who self-define as disabled automatically members*
- *Annual Disabled Members Conference with voting entitlement to mirror Annual Conference*
- *Working with disabled members to develop a strategy for inclusion with more resources dedicated to disabled people being able to participate and access to advice on disabled access*
- *Make available resources for all CLPs, branches, disabled members and the wider Party with advice on disability access and the requirements of the Equality Act Adopt the social model of disability for how we organise as a Party*
- *Disabled Members Conference entitled to send two motions and a constitutional amendment to Annual Conference National Disabled Members Committee (members places elected by OMOV election of disabled members if this can be justified under the Equality Act)*
- *Regional disabled members networks developed Rule book provision for Disabled Members Forum with the same rights as Women's Forum and Ethnic Minority Forum*
- *A Disability Officer elected onto the [Scottish Executive Committee]*
- *Regional/national networks and more support for Disability Officers*
- *Establish a training course for disabled members considering standing as a candidate Evidence compiled to have reserved disabled members seats on bodies such as CLPs and LGCs*

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.

Staff equalities training is regularly organised by our UK Labour partners but in addition to this, since signing the Charter, all Scottish Labour staff participated in training delivered by West of Scotland Regional Equality Council (WSREC) in November 2018. We will continue to

work with third sector partners to keep our staff trained to the highest standard in this area.

From this training, we have built relationships with WSREC and consult them in our efforts to engage marginalised communities, and we are hoping to develop a training module that staff can roll out to local constituency parties at their regular meetings.

We have online training resources (provided through UK Labour) in our Webinar Library for Constituency Officers (voluntary) about their roles which includes inclusion training and making their meetings and events accessible to all members and communities. A more advanced training platform, Achieve is currently in development which will host a number of inclusion training modules for members.

In November 2018, the Scottish Labour Women's Committee published a booklet "Making Everyone Welcome", which was distributed to all Constituency Labour Parties (CLP), MSPs and Women's Forums. The booklet aims to address a number of accessibility issues for CLP activities and advise on how to ensure everyone can participate in the party.

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?

We incorporate the social model of disability language in all of our external communications and member communications but would welcome training on this for all staff and elected officers to increase understanding and usage throughout every level of the organisation.

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?

(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 routinely investigate options but do not currently have facilities or resources for remote presence, digital and/or proxy voting for internal meetings. For internal elections, the majority of our national, internal ballots are conducted by secure digital voting through the Electoral Reform Society.

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 invite all members putting themselves forward for candidacy at local and parliamentary level to complete Equalities Monitoring Form with regards to the 9 protected characteristics but do not have a set date and method for publishing this information but have previously and will continue to publish this.

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?

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

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

Research on job-sharing was conducted during the Democracy Review (2018). Many members, particularly women and disabled members, have explained that it is often easier for them to take on roles on a job share basis. The Review has been given many examples of job shares working well in the Labour Party where individuals have decided to stand together and put effort into making the relationship work. They share their vote and abstain if they can't agree. They are not allowed in some parts of the country. It is

recommended that the Rule Book is amended to allow formal job shares for CLP and Branch officer positions.

This is still in development but we look forward to expanding the option of job-sharing within the Scottish Labour Party.

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?

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

    (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 have launched a Candidate Diversity Programme since signing the pledge, launched with a series of engagement events, including events aimed at culturally diverse women, members of the LGBT community and disabled people. From here, we will be working to train and support these people in their journey to becoming candidates, and having systems in place when they are elected to ensure we retain and improve on the diversity of politicians in Scotland.

We have a Democracy and Diversity Fund which provides financial support to individuals, projects and internal organisations to increase engagement of members with protected characteristics.

We promote the Access to Elected Office Fund (Scotland) in our weekly email bulletin to candidates and staff as well as an internal Labour Party Bursary scheme, which is intended to help members with the additional costs associated with standing as a parliamentary candidate. For example: technology (phone, laptop etc.); travel costs; accommodation; clothing (suits etc.); phone calls; costs of childcare or other caring responsibilities; costs related to disability.

The bursary fund has two categories; working class or low income background and disability support. Candidates can apply for bursary support for a period of up to one year and on an annual basis.