

## **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.**

The statement is not yet finalised. The Party's Diversity Action Group is working on recommendations to be approved by the Executive before summer. We have advertised a special fund to help people (including disabled people) pay for the costs of attending conference.

**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?**

The Liberal Democrat Disability Association (LDDA) is an association of Liberal Democrats, who either have personal experience of disability, look after someone who is disabled, or who are interested in disability.

It works to raise awareness and understanding of disability, both through the Liberal Democrats, and also the rest of society.

LDDA works within the party to raise both understanding of disability and awareness of what disability is. It aims to ensure that disability is not thought about as an after thought, but rather with everything else. It campaigns and lobbies at all levels of the party. It encourages the Party to ensure that all disabled members of the party are able to stand as candidates for election at every level of the party, and also for the party at elections.

**(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.**

Since signing up to the Charter, the Party ran a very successful training session on disability awareness and inclusion for members. This was to supplement the unconscious bias training which is run regularly. The Party does not make a distinction between officers and members. The modules is to be updated and repeated and will be made available on demand to members and Local Parties which request it.

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

The Party has recently adopted a strategy which

includes rolling out disability awareness training for staff, although programmes are still being worked up and have not yet been launched. The Party Manager has attended training sessions on 'How Local Parties can Support Candidates with Disabilities' and 'Engagement Matters – finding members, helpers and voters in diverse communities'. The Scottish Party did not, until recently budget for training but a budget has been made available this year and its staff have been tasked with costing, planning and delivering training and personal development, to include disability equality training.

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

See above

**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?**

Yes, (see Conference motions passim) but It is likely that we could, and should do more to ensure improvement in all areas of language and communication.

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

Yes.

**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?**

Yes.

**(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?**

Our internal elections are conducted by a postal ballot. These are available in plain text, large text and digitally (for the manifesto only) on request. Every reasonable step is taken to ensure participation.

**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?**

It is a matter for candidates as to whether or not they self-identify with protected characteristics. If they do, we do/will publish the data. The opportunity has not yet arisen since the Charter was adopted.

**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?**

The Young Liberals provide for job sharing in office. The Diversity Action Group has been asked to come forward with proposals.

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

An initial discussion will be tabled for the Scottish Executive Committee at its meeting in March 2019.

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

Not as yet. The research for internal roles will likely follow on from initial discussion.

**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 Scottish Party Website includes information for people thinking about becoming a candidate, and this links to the Federal Party website which sets out the extra support available to disabled people who want to become a candidate. The link is: [https://www.libdems.org.uk/become\\_a\\_candidate](https://www.libdems.org.uk/become_a_candidate)

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

Yes, there is training available and in an accessible format. More work could be done to provide specific mentors for our candidates with disabilities. We have recently provided media training to candidates from underrepresented groups, which included disabled people.

**(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?**

Yes. It was most recently promoted at our Scottish Conference on the 8<sup>th</sup> September in Dunfermline where our last Intern spoke about both his internship, and the fund, after he introduced an MSP for their keynote speech. It is also promoted via the LDDA. We would be happy to promote it more via our social media channels and in our all members' communications.