Important

This easy read booklet will explain what some words mean.

The first time we mention a word it will be in **bold blue** writing.

Then there will be a box which will tell you what the word means.

At the back of the booklet there is a list of the words and what they mean. If the words are used again you will see them in **normal blue** writing. When you see them like that you can look them up in the list.

This Easy Read Guide has been produced for Inclusion Scotland by Values Into Action Scotland and uses Photosymbols

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Inclusion Scotland Access to Politics Charter

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In 2014 Inclusion Scotland started to show how disabled people could be more involved in politics. 7 disabled interns went to work with MSPs.

An intern is someone in the workplace who is there to get experience of that job.

The Scottish Government asked Inclusion Scotland to find out why disabled people find it harder to take part in political parties to get the answers.

A political party is a group of people. They often have the same beliefs. They come together to fight elections. They want to hold power in government. This could be local, Scottish, UK or European Governments.

All of the information they got was put together in 1 report by Inclusion Scotland.
This information helped them to create the **Access to Elected Office Fund (Scotland)**

The **Access to Elected Office Fund Scotland** offers money to help disabled people who want to get elected. It also helps people who have already been picked to stand for election.

These elections can be for local councils and Scottish Parliament elections. Inclusion Scotland manages the fund and the money comes from the Scottish Government. It is to help pay for things disabled people need to allow them to get involved in politics. It will cover reasonable adjustments. It will not cover general campaign costs.

You can find out more about this on [www.inclusionscotland.org](http://www.inclusionscotland.org) or you can telephone 0131 281 0860.

The fund pays for any extra costs that people who want to be elected for Local Council or Scottish Parliament might have. It makes sure that disabled people get the same chances as anyone else who wants to be elected.
39 disabled people who became candidates were supported by the fund and 15 became councillors. Inclusion Scotland involved 60 disabled people from across Scotland to talk about the Charter. Some were already involved in politics and some were not. They talked about ideas for the charter and what they wanted to ask the parties to do. The Charter was launched at Scottish Parliament in June 2018. All of the party leaders signed up to the charter on behalf of their parties. They agreed to work on 8 points. (You can read all 8 charter points on pages 8 and 9.
Access to Politics *Charter*

**Introduction**

Access to Politics is a project for disabled people in Scotland. The project wants to break down barriers that disabled people face in politics. It wants disabled people to have the same chance as everyone else to fully take part in politics.

This *charter* was written by disabled people. It shows what *political parties* can do and should do to involve disabled people in politics.

The charter is a document which has a set of ideas of how to do things well.
The Charter Points

1. We will write a statement that says how we will support disabled people to take part in all of the things we do. We will publish that statement.

2. We will help members to set up a group for disabled members within the party.

3. We will make sure everyone in the party is able to have Disability Equality Training.

4. We will make sure that we talk about the Social Model of disability.

The Social Model is a way to think about disability. It shows the world how to include disabled people. It says that what makes a person disabled are the barriers that make you less able to do things.
5. We will look at more accessible ways for people to take part in our work including voting on important matters.

6. We will follow the Law in the Equality Act 2010. The law says people have to be able to see information about anyone who is standing for election.

7. We will look at job sharing for elected roles within the party public roles. Examples of these are councillors, members of the Scottish Parliament, members of Parliament and members of the European Parliament.

8. We will support and encourage disabled people to stand for elections. We will make sure that there are disabled people as candidates.
Charter Guidance

The guidance will help your party to decide how you do all the things you have talked about in the Charter.

You might have more ideas of how to do things. You will be signing up to the Charter. The guidance notes are only there to help you.

1. We will write a statement that says how we will support disabled people to take part in all things we do. We will publish that statement.

The statement says what your party will do to help disabled people to take part. It says how you will make sure this always happens in the party.

The statement should:

- Say clearly what your policy on accessibility is. It should say what the rules are to make sure this happens.
Inclusion Scotland Access to Politics Charter

- Give a list of the things you will do to take away things that would stop people taking part.
- Give people information on how to get support and who will help you get help.

People should be able to get the statement in the way that suits them best. For example it could be Easy Read, Large Print or Audio.

Inclusion Scotland has guides that can help you with this.

The links to these guides are on page 20

2. We will help people to set up a group within the party for disabled members.

You should help disabled members set up a group within your party. You could do this by helping people to get together. You could do this at your conference or do this another time.
3. We will make sure everyone in the party is able to have Disability Equality Training.

Disability Equality Training is different from Disability Awareness training. Disability Equality Training is organised and run by disabled people. It looks at removing barriers and changing attitudes that focus more on the person’s impairment or condition.

4. We will make sure that we talk about disability using the language of the Social Model.

Equality for all disabled people would happen when everyone knows, understands and uses the Social Model of Disability.

The Social Model shows us that a person is not disabled by having an impairment or health condition or by being different from what a doctor might think is normal.

Instead what makes a person disabled are the barriers that make him less able to do things.
Inclusion Scotland Access to Politics Charter

Barriers make life easier for people who don’t have a disability and make it harder for disabled people.

A barrier might be people bullying disabled people or thinking bad things about them. It might be a place not making any changes so that disabled people can live or work there.

It could be physical barriers like a building only having steps and no lift.

For example, a wheelchair user is not disabled because they use a wheelchair. A wheelchair user is disabled because many buildings do not have a step free access. This is a disabling barrier. When we know what a barrier is we can get rid of it so that disabled people are included.

The Social Model was made by disabled people to point out and fight discrimination. It is there to help people live their lives the way they want to.
Inclusion Scotland Access to Politics Charter

5. We will look at different ways for people to take part in our work including voting on important matters.

Disabled people who live in areas where there is no good transport can find it very hard to get to meetings.

You should find and use different technology to help people take part in meetings and to vote. This will make sure disabled people can be included and represented when they cannot get to a meeting. This means a person can be part of a meeting without being in the same room as others.

You need to make sure you have the right equipment to do this. This could be things like Facetime or Skype. You will also need a good internet connection, a phone line and good audio equipment.
Inclusion Scotland Access to Politics Charter

The Chair of the meeting would need to make sure this equipment was used well.

You might need to change your rules for meetings to allow people who are not in the same building as the meeting to take part and vote.

6. We will follow the Law in the **Equality Act 2010**. The Law says people have to be able to see information about anyone who wants to be elected

The **Equality Act 2010** is the UK Government's law to make sure all people are treated fairly. Disabled people are protected by the Act. The Act means everyone having the same chances to do what they can. Some people may need extra help to get the same chances.

It is important that the people in the Scottish, UK Parliament and in Local Councils are as **diverse** as all people in the country. This is not happening yet.
Diverse or diversity is a way to describe people being different from each other.

Political parties must take positive action to have a diverse group of people as an election candidate. They should publish information on the diversity of their candidate. The UK government hasn’t made them do this yet.

Political parties can publish information if they want to. This would be a good thing to do as it will show people what you are doing to promote diversity. Parties who do this can give information without giving the candidate names. Candidates do not have to say if they are part of the group of people protected by the Act. The person’s right to privacy is the most important thing.

7. We will look at job sharing for internal elected roles and elected public office

Being elected to represent other people is called Public Office. This is usually a job in politics that means you work a lot of hours.
People with a long term health condition might not always be able to work for as many hours that are needed to do the job. This means that it might stop disabled people from applying for the job. It also makes other people think that they are not able to do the job at all.

Job sharing is a way to get over this barrier. It would stop disabled people being excluded from doing the job. Some parties and Trade Unions have good examples of how this works. Job sharing can bring benefit to all the people who are job sharing.

Trade Unions are groups of workers who do the same kind of jobs. Trade Unions protect the rights of workers.

You might need to change your rules and some of the ways you do things.
The rules about Reasonable Adjustment in the Equality Act 2010 do not apply yet to Public Office. Some people in the law think it should. The Law would need to change for this to happen.

8. We will support and encourage disabled people to put themselves forward for elected public office. We will make sure that there are disabled people as candidates.

Your party should make sure that you do everything possible to encourage disabled people to put themselves forward for selection. The party could give training and mentoring for anyone who wants to be a candidate. This means they would be more confident about being a candidate.

Even after that disabled people could still face barriers to being active party members, candidates or elected members.
The Access To Elected Office Fund is available to help disabled people with any extra costs they might have when running for selection and election. For example this could be for transport like a taxi, a personal assistant or an interpreter.

Inclusion Scotland’s Access to Politics project gives advice to parties and disabled people.

There are a lot more things a party could do to help disabled people have a chance to be elected. The Equality and Human Rights commission has a report called Equality Act 2010: a guide for political parties. Part 1 of this report will help you understand how you can help more people to be involved in politics.
Useful Links

The Equality Act 2010: a guide for political parties

Access to Elected Office Fund

Access to Politics
http://inclusionscotland.org.what-we-do/employability-and-civicparticipation/access-to-politics

Inclusion Scotland Guides
Access to Local Branch Meetings
Accessibility Summary Checklist
Making Communications Accessible guide
Reasonable Adjustments Example Sheet
Speakers and Presentations Checklist
Venue Checklist
Accessible Formats –
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<td><strong>Equal Representation Coalition – Equal Representation in Politics toolkit</strong></td>
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Words List

Access to Elected Office Fund
This is money to help disabled people in Scotland who want to get elected or who are already standing for election.

Charter
A charter is a document which has a set of ideas of how to do something well.

Diverse or diversity
Diverse or Diversity are words to describe people being different from each other.

Equality Act 2010
The Government’s law to make sure all people are treated fairly

Interns
An intern is someone in the workplace who is there to get experience of that job
Political Parties

A political party is a group of people who have the same beliefs. They come together to fight for elections.

Public Office

Public Office means you are elected to represent other people. It is usually in a job in politics that means you work a lot of hours.

Social Model of Disability

The Social Model of Disability is a way to think about disability. It shows how to include disabled people.

Trade Unions

A Trade Union is a group of workers who do the same kind of jobs. Trade Unions protect the rights of workers.
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