

Scottish Parliament Manifesto 2021–26

Rights and Renewal: A Fresh Start for Disabled People

The Covid-19 crisis hit hard and it hit quickly – and it hit disabled people most of all. From losing vital social care support and being left unable to get out of bed, to fears about involuntary ‘do not resuscitate’ notices, job losses, getting access to basic items like food and medicine and health services and other support services they need. People told us they were ‘being pushed to the brink’.

Before Covid-19, disabled people were already some of the most marginalised and excluded in society. We were already more likely to live in poverty, be unemployed or to earn less than non-disabled people, and less likely to leave school with qualifications, in addition to facing barriers and exclusion in our day-to-day lives. The Covid-19 crisis and responses to it highlighted and aggravated this, generating new inequalities, and putting the human rights of disabled people at further risk.

Going back to the way things were before is not good enough for disabled people.

Inclusion Scotland’s Manifesto is informed by the lived experience of disabled people and they told us what needs to change. The next Scottish Parliament can deliver these **Five Asks** to make a post Covid-19 Scotland better for disabled people:

- 1. Incorporate the UN Convention on Rights of Disabled People into Scots Law to fully promote, protect and realise our human rights.**
- 2. Recognise social care support as a fundamental basic right with the same criteria wherever you live.**
- 3. Ensure equal access to education and jobs for disabled people, particularly disabled young people.**
- 4. Use Scottish Social Security powers to help reduce the number of disabled people living in poverty.**
- 5. Involve us, the experts in our own lives, in making post Covid-19 Scotland better for disabled people.**

We urge all candidates for the Scottish Parliament Elections to back disabled people’s Five Asks for a fresh start.



1

Incorporate the UN Convention on Rights of Disabled People into Scots Law to fully promote, protect and realise our human rights.

What disabled people's lived experience tells us:

- “I think the human rights of disabled people and older people are being completely ignored.”
- “I can see clearly that, as a disabled person, I count even less and have no rights compared to before Covid-19.”
- “My greatest fear is that if I were to experience complications from the virus and require admission to hospital, as a disabled person, I would not receive the same care that I would as an able-bodied person.”

What disabled people want:

- The incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCRPD) into Scots' law as soon as possible, and support to enable us to challenge in court the laws, policies and practices that breach our human rights and to get redress and change.
- Future emergency legislation and processes to deal with pandemics or other crises must not remove from disabled people fundamental rights to life, equal recognition before the law, liberty and security, health, and independent living.
- To ensure that disabled people can exercise their right to access services on the same basis as anyone else – particularly health and mental health treatments, food and medicines.

2

Recognise social care support as a fundamental basic right, with the same criteria wherever you live.

What disabled people's lived experience tells us:

- “I have gone from 20 hours of care to zero. I am now bedbound completely because of this.”
- “The plight of disabled people and unpaid carers has been largely ignored: the devastating cuts in social care; what happens to disabled children; the fact that nothing has really been done to support family carers who are doing far more. We feel abandoned – as if we don't matter.”
- “I receive Self-Directed Support Option 1 and I think this is the difference: I am paid directly and carried out all checks on my personal assistant myself. Local authorities cannot withdraw care and send my care staff elsewhere, e.g., care homes.”

What disabled people want:

- A National Social Care Support Service that recognises that social care support is a basic right and fundamental to participative citizenship, with a set of universal criteria coproduced with disabled people. Whether disabled people can have human rights should never be subject to local priorities.
- Cuts to social care support to be reversed and an end to all charges for social care support.
- The Independent Living Fund Scotland to be reopened to new claims.

3 Ensure equal access to education and jobs for disabled people, particularly disabled young people.

What disabled people's lived experience tells us:

- 💬 “Concerned that I will have to make the decision to put myself at risk or lose my job.”
- 💬 “All the simple adjustments to enable distance working that I'd previously been told were impossible have started to be made.”
- 💬 “My son has ASD and self-harms/has suicidal thoughts. He is also really volatile and can hit out. He has no support at all now, as his main support was a school counsellor.”

What disabled people want:

- The Scottish Government to remove employer-based barriers to disabled people, working with employers to encourage flexibility in working hours and arrangements that recognise the individual needs of disabled people.
- Disabled people to be a priority group for access to the Young Person's Guarantee and employability support schemes to be designed with disabled people.
- Education that is inclusive for all and each disabled child and disabled young person to receive appropriate care and support before, and during, the transition to adulthood.

4 Use Scottish Social Security powers to help reduce the number of disabled people living in poverty.

What disabled people's lived experience tells us:

- 💬 “Have an application for PIP in that is not seeming to progress... I've read they are pushing these aside to prioritise new claims (to Universal Credit) which will leave me with no money for food after bills are paid.”

- “Disabled people already face additional daily living costs, but these have gone up even more due to things like having to pay for online deliveries for essentials and PPE and cleaning materials for our carers.”
- “There was a 40% reduction in claims for Personal Independence Payment during the first month of Covid-19 lockdown.”

What disabled people want:

- The Scottish Government to use devolved powers to top-up social security payments, similar to the child payment, for families with one or more disabled parent or disabled child.
- Child poverty reduced by increasing funding for the Scottish Welfare Fund and assisting families in priority groups, including families with disabled children.
- Campaigns to ensure everyone who should be in receipt of the new Scottish Disability Payments, Children’s Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or Attendance Allowance is getting it.

5 Involve us, the experts in our own lives, in making post Covid-19 Scotland better for disabled people.

What disabled people’s lived experience tells us:

- “Inaccessible systems and processes were put in place without consulting disabled people, including social distancing rules for supermarkets for people who require assistance.”
- “It’s clear that there’s no contingency plan for services for disabled people.”
- “Too much conflicting information. Information that doesn't consider disabled people's experiences.”

What disabled people want:

- Full recognition and involvement of our Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) – organisations run by disabled people for disabled people – by decision and policy makers, those holding them to account, and by funders.
- Communicate with us and inform us in ways that are accessible to us.
- Stop stigmatising disabled people as vulnerable and problematic.

Visit our website www.inclusionScotland.org/manifesto2021 to show your support for our Five Asks. Easy Read, large print and BSL versions and separate briefings on each of the Five Asks are available on our website.

Inclusion Scotland, 22–24 Earl Grey Street, Edinburgh, EH3 9DQ ☎: 0131 370 6700
 Email: info@inclusionScotland.org Website: www.inclusionScotland.org



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