

How to apply to the Access to Elected Office Fund



Easy Read



What is the Fund for?



The Access to Elected Office Fund helps to get rid of things that make it harder for disabled people to **stand for election**.

These things are called **barriers**.



Standing for election means asking people to vote for you to represent their local area:

- as a councillor
- as a Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP)



The Fund gives money to cover the extra costs of standing for election that non-disabled candidates would not have.



This gives disabled people a more equal chance to take part in politics.

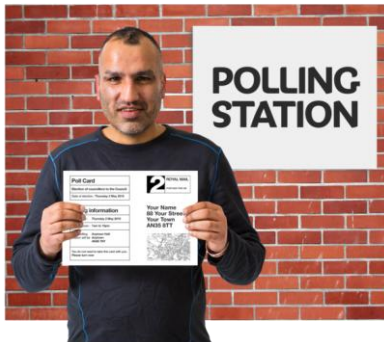
Check if you can apply to the Fund



To apply for the Fund you must:

- be disabled as it is described in the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act protects people from discrimination and helps to make sure people are treated fairly.



- have said that you will either:
 - want to be selected for an election covered by the Fund
 - have been selected
 - plan to stand as an **independent candidate** – this means you are not representing any political party



- follow the rules for elections



The Fund opens before each election it supports.

Ask Inclusion Scotland for advice if you are not sure if the Fund is open for applications.

What you can claim for



The Fund can cover costs linked to your campaign including:

- **assistive technology** – this means products or services that help disabled people live as independently as possible
- **coaching** – this means working with a person to support you to deal with any barriers
- communication support
- personal assistance
- travel costs





Inclusion Scotland can give you advice if you are not sure if something would be covered by the Fund

Step 1: Contact Inclusion Scotland



Let us know you want to apply by:

- email:
civicparticipation@inclusionscotland.org
- or phone: 0131 370 6700



A member of the Participation team will:

- guide you through the process
- answer any questions you may have
- arrange a time for your application meeting

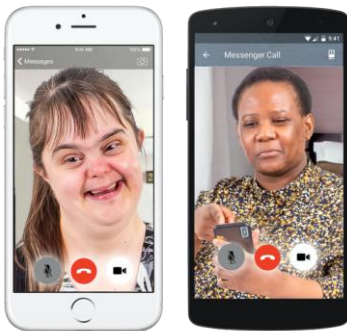




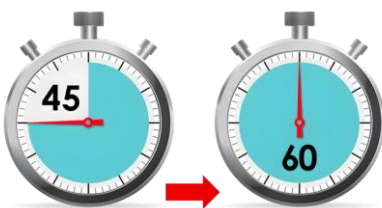
You can discuss what you need and ask for any **adjustments** that you need at any time.

Adjustments are changes employers must make to give a person who is disabled the same chance as anyone else to get and do a job.

Step 2: Attend your application meeting



You will be invited to a meeting with an Inclusion Scotland staff member by video call or telephone.



This meeting will last between 45 minutes to an hour.



You can bring someone with you to support you.



This meeting is a chance to:

- learn more about Inclusion Scotland and the Fund
- talk about:
 - your campaign plans
 - what you need to stand for election
 - what things make it difficult for you to stand for election



- think about what support would make the biggest difference to your campaign



You do not need to prepare anything but it is useful to think about:

- the campaigning activities you plan to do



- the barriers you might face when campaigning
- any support that has worked well for you before



After the meeting you will be sent 4 forms:

- Data Protection and Equalities Monitoring forms - to be filled in by you
- Application form – this will be partly filled out at the meeting with a few bits for you to fill in afterwards
- Recommendations letter – this is drafted by Inclusion Scotland based on what you talked about at your meeting



The recommendations letter is sent to you to agree before it goes to the Decision Panel.



You can ask for changes as many times as needed until you are comfortable with the support being suggested.

Step 3: Wait for the review of the Decision Panel



After you have sent in your forms and agreed with your recommendations letter your application will be **anonymised** and sent to the Fund's Decision Panel for **review**.



Anonymised means it will not have your name on it or have any way to tell it is about you.



Review means the panel will check over the form and make a decision.



The panel is a small group of independent disabled volunteers who will check your application looking at:

- what makes campaigning difficult for you
- if the support in your recommendations letter is correct and is linked to your campaign work
- how the award would support you to take part in the election in the same ways as non-disabled people



The panel make sure that funding decisions:

- treat everyone fairly and equally
- give people what they need
- follow the rules of what the Fund is for



Step 4: get your award outcome – what decision has been made



When the Decision Panel has checked your application they will tell you the outcome.

If your application is approved you will be given details of your award and how it will be set up.



If your application is not approved you will be told why.

If you would like to try again to get funding you can work with Inclusion Scotland to make changes to your application and send it in again.

Step 5: Use your award



How you use your award will depend on the type of support that has been agreed for you.

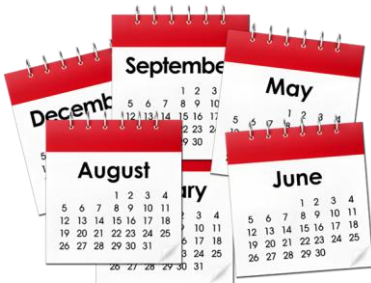


Inclusion Scotland will work with you to make sure your award is set up in an easy way and that it gives you what you need.



You will have review meetings with Inclusion Scotland from time to time.

The timing of these reviews will be set out in your recommendations.



The meetings:

- usually take place every 4 to 6 weeks or at the end of campaign blocks
- make sure your award is working well so that it is:
 - not more than you need
 - giving enough support



Types of support

Assistive technology

You may be invited to a needs assessment where a specialist will recommend what machines, equipment or information would be best for you like:

- physical equipment
- specialist software
- app subscriptions



If you already know what works best for you the fund can usually provide it without an assessment.

Coaching

You may attend coaching sessions with staff who will help you deal any barriers you have and what you need.





Communication support

When taking part in meetings, events, or speaking to people you want to vote for you, you may be able to get support from:

- British Sign Language interpreters
- electronic notetakers
- lipspeakers
- speech-to-text reporters



Inclusion Scotland can help you to find and book the right communication support that you need.

Personal assistance

Personal assistance is usually arranged through the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living, Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living, or another provider in your area.





Some applicants hire their own support if background checks have been done.

Inclusion Scotland will support you through this process but will hire Personal Assistants for you.

Travel costs

Depending on your travel needs:



- a taxi account may be set up with a local company so you do not need to pay when you travel
- you may be given an allowance for public transport
- you may get money back for driving costs



Step 6: Take part in our evaluation



Your experience of the Fund is very important.

Evaluation helps us understand:

- what works well
- what could be made better
- how the Fund is making a difference for disabled candidates in Scotland



At different parts of your Fund journey we will ask you to fill out short surveys to find out what you think:

- about the support you received
- about how it affected how you campaigned



You may also be invited to take part in follow-up conversations or other feedback activities.

Your feedback helps us:



- make sure the Fund gives disabled people what they need
- have proof to show the Scottish Government why this kind of support is needed



By sharing your experiences you are helping people to understand why everyone should have equal access to politics.

Other resources

You can find more support on our website here: inclusionscotland.org including:



- helpful information about campaigning
- links to other organisations that support disabled people to get involved in politics

