
STAND FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN

www.beacouncillor.co.uk | [@beacouncillor](https://twitter.com/beacouncillor)



Improving access to local government
elected office for people with disabilities

For more information about how to become
a councillor or to find out more about the role,
visit www.beacouncillor.co.uk

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Background to the programme	5
Learning from the programme	6
Key challenges for the sector	12
Resources and contacts	15



INTRODUCTION

The Government and the Local Government Association (LGA) believe that democratic institutions make the best decisions when they have a mix of people with different skills, backgrounds and experiences.

Local government is only ever as vibrant, effective and relevant as the people elected to run it. Increasing the pool of talent from which councillors are elected is a key challenge for the sector. Only by encouraging the brightest stars to stand for election can we ensure that councils are able to do the best for their communities. We need plenty of high-quality prospective councillors ready and willing to work hard and make a difference to their local communities.

More than 11 million people in Great Britain have a limiting long-term illness, impairment or disability. Around 16 per cent of working-age adults have a disability and this figure rises to 45 per cent of adults over state pension age. However, the LGA's latest councillor census (2013) showed that just 13.2 per cent of councillors said they had a disability or long-term illness. These figures show just how important it is to ensure that people with disabilities are encouraged and empowered to stand for election.

Everyone needs to play their part in 'talent spotting' – actively looking out for committed, enthusiastic people who could make great councillors.

Whether you are a councillor yourself, are involved in the formal selection process, are a council officer or an active political party member keen to initiate change, you have an important role to play.

Ultimately, it's the electorate that decides who becomes a councillor, but we can all think more creatively about how to widen the talent pool in local government. This booklet provides learning, tips, resources and inspiration on how to encourage more people with disabilities to stand for election.

Lord Porter of Spalding CBE

LGA Chairman

Councillor Nick Forbes

Labour Group Leader and
LGA Senior Vice-Chair

Councillor Howard Sykes MBE

Liberal Democrat Group Leader and
LGA Vice-Chairman

Councillor Marianne Overton MBE

Independent Group Leader and
LGA Vice-Chairman

Councillor David Simmonds CBE

Conservative Group Leader and
LGA Vice-Chairman

BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAMME

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) funded an LGA-led pilot programme under the LGAs 'Be a Councillor' campaign to mentor prospective candidates with disabilities and to work within political parties and groups to affect change in attitudes and behaviours to councillor recruitment. The pilot programme ran for one year over 2014/15.

This programme was part of a wider strategy of Government support to help disabled people to participate in political life, launched following the 2010 cross-party Speaker's Conference report on increasing diversity in parliamentary representation. The strategy included:

- The Access to Elected Office Fund (A2EO) – a three-year pilot fund to help disabled people with the additional costs faced in seeking election as a result of their disability.
www.gov.uk/access-to-elected-office-fund/
- Guidance for political parties on their legal obligations (under the Equality Act 2010) towards disabled members and candidates.
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85508/disabled-access-guidance.pdf
- Training support, including funding for disabled interns with MPs, under the Speaker's Parliamentary Placement Scheme.
www.parliament.uk/about/working/work-placements-and-apprenticeships/speakers-parliamentary-placement-scheme/

The LGA programme arose from the A2EO Fund receiving enquiries from potential candidates with disabilities who were unsure about whether they were ready to stand for election. What they really needed was mentoring and training in the skills required before making a commitment to stand as a councillor – or deciding not to stand.

LEARNING FROM THE PROGRAMME

The learning and findings from the LGA programme have been drawn out through evaluation and interviews with the participants, their mentors and the political advisors leading the programme.

While there is no 'quick fix' to ensuring councils better represent their electorate, this section provides ideas, suggestions and challenges for all those involved in recruiting councillors to help encourage more people with disabilities to stand for election. Whether you are looking for inspiration, advice or opportunities to find new talent, we hope you find it to be a useful resource of small steps that can make a big difference. The action points apply variously to individuals, political parties, councils, council officers and others.

The key learning points cover the whole process of encouraging people to stand for election, from reviewing political party/group structures to providing support to people who have won or lost an election. Each section includes a 'tick box' summary of the ideas. It is worth noting that many of the actions are either low or no-cost – but rather require a commitment to harnessing positive attitudes.

Susanne Rees, Green Party candidate for Kettering Borough Council

“I’m still really young but I’ve got a lot of life experience. Almost every single public service you can think of I’ve had experience of.”

Be proactive

- **Consider your party and/or group structures, selection process, culture and accessibility** – how can they be made more open to people with disabilities? How disability-confident are they? How do you respond to people who want to get involved but face extra challenges in doing so?
- **Establish or strengthen links with disability groups and organisations and others who are relevant** – think: diversity, equality, participation, engagement, democracy. Create ongoing relationships, share ideas and involve them in identifying future talent. However, note that some organisations may be wary about getting involved in ‘big p’ political work, especially if approached by just one party.
- **Share messages and opportunities** for people to get involved in a range of ways, for example through social media and information-sharing events specifically for people with disabilities or local disability groups.
- **Tap into existing resources** at a local, national and regional level (and see our Resources section in this document). For example, charity databases to find organisations that can help you reach your target audiences or provide advice; big news stories, events and campaigns to link activities to; publications or wider debates about inclusive and accessible communities.
- **Think ‘disability’ when planning activities and initiatives** by ensuring that practical arrangements have been made, such as a good geographical spread of activities, advance notice of events and meeting people’s individual requirements.
- **Consider different ways of working** for activists and candidates such as planning activities that can be done from home, giving advance notice so that people can conserve energy, and building in regular breaks.
- **Engage members and officers at all levels and provide training** to improve understanding of disability issues, listen to their ideas and ask them to get involved. How disability-confident are you and others? Are you aware of the social and medical models of disability?
- **Ensure a bottom-up approach to avoid assumptions** about disabled people – just ask.

Councillor Colin Mann (Plaid Cymru),
Caerphilly County Borough Council, Mentor

“One of the biggest problems is people’s perception of what people with disabilities can do. Having positive examples helps to demonstrate what people can achieve.”

Be proactive

- ✓ consider party/group structures, selection process, culture and accessibility
- ✓ establish or strengthen links with disability and democracy groups/organisations
- ✓ share messages and opportunities
- ✓ tap into existing resources
- ✓ think ‘disability’ when planning activities and initiatives
- ✓ consider different ways of working
- ✓ engage members and officers at all levels and provide training
- ✓ ensure a bottom-up approach to avoid assumptions about disabled people

Raise awareness and engage

Clare Whelan, Conservative Adviser to the LGA's Be a Councillor programme

"We have some excellent examples of successful councillors with disabilities and have used them to open people's eyes as to what is possible."

- **Use the full range of media** to promote the role of a councillor, encourage people and talent-spot. Think: social media (which is particularly accessible), community hubs and websites, local and national media, council magazines, etc.
- **Link your activities to big stories, events and campaigns** such as new legislation, Local Democracy Week, Disabled Access Day, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Paralympic Games and other events (see the Resources section for further ideas).
- **Engage with your disability communities** – approach active members of local voluntary groups, community groups, student groups, former youth parliament members and other community activists with disabilities to ask them to consider standing.
- **Work with local community and disability groups** to promote the role of a councillor, as well as engaging political party groups or forums for disabled members.
- **Promote the benefits of being a councillor** such as gaining skills, knowledge and experience to add to your CV as well as the social aspect of being with likeminded people.
- **Enlist the help of role models to inspire others** – existing councillors, candidates or community activists who have a disability and would be good at promoting the role.
- **Run cross-party, council-led activities** to engage local people, such as events specifically for potential candidates with disabilities, outlining the role and the help available, and ensure all levels of councillors and officers are in attendance.
- **Appoint a champion** within your party/group or council who can raise the profile of disability-related issues and act as a point of contact.

Ellen Salkfeld, prospective Labour councillor in Greenwich, London

"I am a political person but I feel that my disability has held me back. With severe arthritis there are some things I can't do well, such as canvassing via door-knocking. That stops me getting more involved at branch level. The needs of disabled people are varied and this needs to be better reflected in planning by the political parties."

Raise awareness and engage

- ✓ use all media channels, especially social media
- ✓ link into big stories, events and campaigns
- ✓ engage with your disability communities
- ✓ work with local community and disability groups
- ✓ promote the benefits of being a councillor
- ✓ enlist the help of role models
- ✓ run cross-party, council-led activities
- ✓ appoint a champion

Inform and assist

Nan Sloane, Labour Party Adviser to the Be a Councillor programme

“Lots of people are out there thinking ‘I want to have an influence over decision-making and I don’t know how to do that’. We need to get information across to a wide range of people, including those who manage local selections and campaigns, so that nobody makes assumptions as to who can get involved.”

- **Provide extra encouragement** to potential candidates with disabilities from the start, explaining the support on offer and providing reassurance.
- Learning from the LGA's Be a Councillor campaign has shown that **simply asking people to consider standing for election** by personally approaching and encouraging people can be very effective.
- **Avoid making assumptions** about an individual's disability or support needs – just ask.
- **Provide bespoke support** which meets an individual's needs rather than taking a one size fits all approach. 11 million people with disabilities means 11 million different needs – focus on the person, not the jargon.
- **Get back to basics** by running sessions that explain what the council does and the role of a councillor. Many people know little about local government so be careful to avoid jargon, acronyms or assumptions about knowledge.
- **Ensure that people know what support they can get** as a disabled candidate or councillor through central government schemes, the LGA, local parties, political groups and the council, but remember – initiatives have varying lifespans so keep up to date with what is available.
- **Explain how being a councillor might impact on welfare benefits** – consider asking an existing councillor with a disability, Citizens Advice Bureau and disability groups/ organisations for advice.

Vanessa Chagas, LGA Independent Group

“One participant in the mentoring scheme made a personal breakthrough by publicly verbalising, for the first time in his life, that he had dyslexia. We were able to offer reassurance and point him towards support.”

Inform and assist

- ✓ provide extra encouragement
- ✓ simply ask – personally approach people and provide encouragement
- ✓ avoid making assumptions about people's support needs – just ask
- ✓ provide bespoke support
- ✓ get 'back to basics' – avoid assumptions of local government knowledge
- ✓ ensure people know what support they can get
- ✓ explain how being a councillor may impact on benefits

Invest in candidates

Clare Whelan, Conservative Adviser to the Be a Councillor campaign

“You can’t have a short programme of support and think ‘that’s done the job’. This is a message that we have to keep repeating.”

- **Identify strengths and needs** – talk to individual candidates about what their strengths are, what they want to achieve and what would help them to do so. Again, take care not to make assumptions about someone’s support needs – just ask.
- **Facilitate introductions and networking** with people in your political party, group or council as well as with other potential candidates, which can be especially important for independent candidates and those running for a smaller party. Councils could consider how they can help to facilitate networks or buddying schemes.
- **Arrange for people to see what the role involves** – for example by shadowing a councillor or attending council or committee meetings – this can offer a useful insight into the role.
- **Set up personal development sessions** to build skills and knowledge, such as confidence building, public speaking, leadership skills, campaigning or policy formation.
- **Consider a mentoring or coaching system** which pairs the candidate with an experienced councillor who has been trained to provide advice and support. Former councillors with plenty of experience may be happy to get involved in supporting the next generation of politicians. Mentors have the opportunity to meet with a wider group of local candidates and can increase their own disability confidence.
- **Help to build ward knowledge** by going with the prospective candidate on a tour of their ward to discuss local issues, casework management and how to engage with residents.

John Carroll, prospective Independent councillor in Greenwich, London

“I have several disabilities, including Parkinson’s disease, but I never let this stop me. I didn’t believe I could be a councillor but now I know that even my lack of spelling and grammar won’t hold me back. That is down to my mentor and everyone who helped to support and encourage me.”

Invest in candidates

- identify strengths and needs
- facilitate introductions and networking
- provide opportunities to see what the role involves in practice
- set up personal development sessions
- mentoring and coaching opportunities
- help build ward knowledge

Post-election support

Councillor Glen Sanderson (Conservative),
Northumberland Council, Mentor

“Whether my mentee gets elected or not, I’ll be there at the end of the phone.”

- **Consider what skills and knowledge new councillors need** – could you offer any extra personal development support alongside the usual council induction programme?
- **Be wary of pigeon-holing** – just because someone has a disability doesn’t mean they will want to champion or take the portfolio for disability or equality issues, adult or children’s services. However, they may be happy to do so.
- **Maintain practical and emotional support** for new councillors with disabilities, possibly through continued mentoring or coaching activities and other support to help get to grips with the new role. Make sure anything that was promised to disabled councillors is delivered.
- **Think about your long-term engagement strategy** – if there is no local election in your area for some time, how will you keep potential candidates engaged and enthusiastic?
- **Being a councillor is not for everyone** – but can you offer support, signposting or contacts for people who decide not to stand for election but want to be involved in the party or local community in other ways, as well as support for candidates who stood but were not elected?

Eli Heathfield, Conservative candidate
for Forest of Dean District Council

“I have dyspraxia and autism so I face various challenges. Having a mentor has helped enormously with my confidence and decision making. He gives me all the options yet lets me decide, which has definitely helped my inner strength and resolve. Everyone I have met in my own party has wholeheartedly encouraged and supported me.”

Former councillor Michael Taylor
(Liberal Democrat), West Yorkshire, Mentor

“My mentee has decided not to stand for election again but she is happy that she tried. I provided practical support and advice on issues such as fighting elections, the councillor’s role and the selection process.”

Post-election support

- ✓ consider what skills and knowledge new councillors need
- ✓ be wary of pigeon-holing
- ✓ maintain practical and emotional support
- ✓ think about your long-term engagement strategy
- ✓ support candidates who didn’t stand or were not elected

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE SECTOR

Susanne Rees, Green Party candidate for Kettering Borough Council

“I would strongly recommend that the political parties provide greater opportunities for people with disabilities. Adversity can bring about a great strength in people. Disabled people who want to get involved in politics tend to be very determined.”

Evaluating this programme has revealed ideas and insights into how political parties/groups and councils can encourage people with disabilities to get involved in local politics. This document has provided practical ideas on how to do that.

In this section, we will draw out the key challenges for parties, groups and councils to consider in taking this forward:

Challenges for the sector

- ✓ reflecting our communities
- ✓ making politics accessible
- ✓ meeting the needs of individuals
- ✓ linking people into support
- ✓ providing training, coaching and mentoring

Reflecting our communities

Nan Sloane, Labour Party Adviser to the Be a Councillor programme

“There are whole groups of people who don’t think that public office is something they can do. All the political parties need to be better at encouraging them.”

Democratic institutions make the best decisions and are able to do the best for their communities when they have a mix of people with different skills, backgrounds and experiences. Having plenty of high-quality prospective councillors ready and willing to make a difference to their local communities can only be good for local democracy.

Everyone needs to play their part in ‘talent spotting’ – actively looking out for committed, enthusiastic people who could make great councillors. Councillors (independent and political party members), selectors, party activists, and council officers all have an important role to play.

Making politics accessible

Councillor Glen Sanderson (Conservative), Northumberland Council, Mentor

“I think it’s fair to say that most politicians, myself included, are fairly ignorant about the needs and capabilities of people with disabilities. I wanted to help someone get to a position where they could stand for election, and that’s why I got involved as a mentor.”

Local parties and groups are essential in encouraging disabled people to be politically active. There is general cross-party consensus that the national parties could be more accessible to all newcomers and local political groups, better at identifying and reaching out to disabled candidates at an earlier stage, and mainstreaming these activities.

Meeting the needs of individuals

Steve Hitchins, Liberal Democrat Adviser to the Be a Councillor programme

“In my experience, people with disabilities who want to get involved in politics tend to be very determined so they make exceptional candidates and exceptional councillors.”

Everyone has different knowledge, skills and experience to offer and different support needs (disability support and personal development support). Feedback from this programme has shown that bespoke support is highly valued and offering different ways of working can make a real difference to people with disabilities.

One participant who was interviewed said she gets tired easily, so having advance notice of events and campaigning activities allows her to conserve energy for them.

A candidate with a hearing impairment said that lip-reading is tiring and regular breaks make it easier to absorb the information. A candidate who has problems with speech said that telephone canvassing was difficult but door-to-door campaigning was fine.

As councillors take on a voluntary role rather than being employed, councils are not bound by the Equality Act 2010 duty to provide reasonable adjustments. However, this is one area of legislation which, rather than stating what one cannot do, encourages organisations to be proactive and positive. Councils can look to extend the support they provide to their workforce to include candidates and councillors. The duty provides some helpful examples of practice which makes good business sense for helping candidates and councillors to be effective and fully participate (see the resources section for further details).

Ellen Salkfeld, prospective Labour councillor in Greenwich, London

“My brain works just as well as anyone else’s, it’s just my body that is slower. Designing activities which can be done from home such as virtual phone banking, policy input, online survey responses and so on could really help.”

Linking people into support

Another key challenge is for councillors, parties, groups and councils to provide practical and emotional support for potential candidates and link them to other sources such as grants. National initiatives have varying lifespans, so it is important to know which schemes are currently running and where support can be found.

Knowing who to turn to within the national parties or LGA for advice on helping people with disabilities is important. Advice can also come from national organisations, charities and support groups that cover particular disabilities and health conditions. There appears to be a general consensus that links between political parties and disability organisations are helpful but that it can be difficult to make those links.

People wishing to stand as independent councillors or for the smaller parties face a particular challenge as they can’t tap into such support as available within the larger parties. Councils, councillors and independent groups could consider how to reach out to people with disabilities who are interested in standing for election in these circumstances.

Former councillor Michael Taylor (Liberal Democrat), West Yorkshire, Mentor

“My mentee found it difficult to ‘jump through the bureaucratic hoops’ to access support and funding. The process took too much time and the support came too late in the day to help with her campaign.”

Providing training, coaching and mentoring

Those taking part in the LGA programme generally found the experience to be very positive and extremely helpful, particularly in areas such as building confidence and providing practical information. However, there is a need to clearly define the difference between mentoring and coaching, ensure clarity of roles and objectives and work out which is most appropriate for an individual and their aims.

It is important that those who support prospective candidates have some training. Do you provide high-quality training on disability confidence, as well as on coaching and mentoring.

Councillor Reema Patel (Labour), London Borough of Barnet, Mentor

“There is an element of self-reflection when you are helping to develop someone else which I found interesting. During one discussion I advised my mentee to be more assertive and push for more support, and afterwards it occurred to me that I needed to do that too. Being a mentor is definitely a learning process.”

Susanne Rees, Green Party candidate for Kettering Borough Council

“Through coaching I was able to confront my self-esteem issues and create strategies to overcome them. I now have strategies to maximise my effectiveness as a councillor and feel more able to voice my opinions. The support from the LGA Independent Group was fantastic and my mentors were extremely enabling. I’m now standing to be a councillor and it’s very exciting.”

RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

This section provides a (by no means exhaustive) list of useful resources found during the course of this programme. There are a huge range of disability, diversity, equality, participation, democracy and engagement groups and organisations that can be useful in different circumstances, along with campaigns and events – just a few are listed here. Consider using these to gain inspiration, link your activities to and help inform your thinking around disability issues and politics.

Make contact

For further information about this area of work, please contact:

The Local Government Association (LGA)

provides support to councillors at all stages of their political career – from entering the world of politics to leading a council. For more information about the support on offer, see our ‘Highlighting Political Leadership’ programme: www.local.gov.uk/councillor-development
www.local.gov.uk

Be a Councillor

The LGA runs the Be a Councillor campaign which works with councils, political parties, individuals and talent-spotters to encourage more people to stand as a local councillor. The campaign offers a range of materials and tools, and these can be tailored to specific councils and audiences.

www.beacouncillor.co.uk
[@beacouncillor](https://twitter.com/beacouncillor)

Virginia Ponton

Adviser – Leadership and Localism
beacouncillor@local.gov.uk

LGA Conservative Group Office

www.local.gov.uk/lga-conservatives

lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
020 7664 3264

LGA Independent Group Office

Represents Councillors in England and Wales who are Independent or of a political affiliation outside of Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat.

www.local.gov.uk/lga-independent

independent.group@lga.local.gov.uk
020 7664 3224

LGA Labour Group Office

www.local.gov.uk/lga-labour

Martin Angus

Political Adviser
martin.angus@local.gov.uk
020 7664 3134

Liberal Democrat Group Office

www.local.gov.uk/lga-lib-dem-group

Terry Stacy

Head of LGA Liberal Democrat Group
terry.stacy@local.gov.uk
020 7664 3295

The Government Equalities Office – is responsible for equality strategy and legislation across government.
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-equalities-office

Government resources

Speaker's Conference (on Parliamentary Representation) – Final Report

A Speaker's Conference brings House of Commons members together to address constitutional issues of particular significance or sensitivity which require a cross-party solution. The Conference looked into under-representation of certain groups of people in Parliament.
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/spconf/239/23902.htm

Accessible Britain Challenge

Encouraging councils, local businesses and groups to work with the UK's disabled people to remove barriers preventing full participation in their community.
www.gov.uk/accessiblebritain

Access to Elected Office for Disabled People Strategy: Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 – Guidance for political parties

To inform political parties of their obligations under the Equality Act 2010, especially in making reasonable adjustments, with the aim to help parties become more inclusive and involve disabled people more in public life.
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85508/disabled-access-guidance.pdf

Reasonable adjustments

Councillors take on a voluntary role rather than being employed by councils and are therefore not covered by the Equality Act 2010 duty to make reasonable adjustments. The Government's guidance, however, provides some examples of practice which makes good business sense for helping candidates and councillors to be effective and able to fully participate.

www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/discrimination-at-work/what-are-the-different-types-of-discrimination/duty-to-make-reasonable-adjustments-at-work-what-must-employers-do/

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/multipage-guide/employment-workplace-adjustments

The Speaker's Parliamentary Placement

Scheme believes Parliament should be accessible to everyone. It is widening access by offering paid placements to people who have the skills, passion and potential to work in Parliament but don't have access to the traditional routes in.

www.parliament.uk/about/working/work-placements-and-apprenticeships/speakers-parliamentary-placement-scheme/

Office for Disability Issues

Part of the Department for Work and Pensions, which helps to develop policies to remove inequality between disabled and non-disabled people.
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-disability-issues

Cabinet Office democratic engagement and voter registration resources

This programme is part of the Government's strategy to improve voter engagement and increase the levels of voter registration.
www.gov.uk/government/collections/democratic-engagement-resources

UK Youth Parliament

Run by young people for young people, providing opportunities for 11-18 year-olds to participate in the political process to bring about social change.
www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk

Disability benefits

An A-Z of the various carer and disability benefits. For advice on how benefits might be affected by becoming a councillor, individuals can contact Citizens Advice.
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/
www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/disability

Charity databases

Charity Choice

Charitychoice.co.uk provides a comprehensive database of charities.

www.charitychoice.co.uk/charities/disabled

Charity Commission

Register of charities with an advanced search function.

<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/registerhomepage.aspx>

Non-Governmental Organisations

Electoral Commission

An independent watchdog set up by the UK Parliament, charged with regulating party and election finance and setting standards for well-run elections. Includes guidance on how to stand for election.

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk>

Equality & Human Rights Commission

Challenges discrimination and protects and promotes human rights, including bringing about equality for disabled people.

www.equalityhumanrights.com

National political parties

Conservative Party

www.conservativecouncillors.com/become-councillor

Conservative Disability Group

Promotes equal opportunities and independence for disabled people, offering advice and information to party members to enhance their understanding of disability issues.

www.conservativedisabilitygroup.com

Green Party

www.greenparty.org.uk

Labour Party

<https://labour.org.uk>

Disability Labour

Labour's disability group, which looks to extend rights for disabled people and remove the barriers they face from employment to public services.

www.disabilitylabour.org.uk

Be a Labour Councillor: A guide for disabled members and local parties

www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/be-labour-councillor-guid-6a1.pdf

Liberal Democrats

www.libdems.org.uk

Liberal Democrat Disability Association

Members have personal experience of disability, are carers or have an interest in disability.

The group works to raise awareness and understanding of disability.

<http://disabilitylibdems.org.uk/en/>

Plaid Cymru

www.plaid.cymru

UKIP

www.ukip.org

Advocacy Groups

AbilityNet

Assists disabled people through digital technology at work, at home or in education, and works with other organisations to design and maintain accessible websites, apps and other digital tools.

www.abilitynet.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss

Experts in providing support for people with hearing loss and tinnitus

www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Breakthrough UK

Promoting the rights, responsibilities and respect of disabled people through political influence, career development and providing greater choice and control for disabled people.

www.breakthrough-uk.co.uk

Business Disability Forum

Helps build disability-smart organisations to increase confidence, accessibility, productivity and profitability.

www.businessdisabilityforum.org.uk

Circles Network

Builds inclusive communities, focusing on justice, advocacy, empowerment and friendships, across the UK.

www.circlesnetwork.org.uk

Volunteering Matters

Empowers disabled people to take an active role in their communities, and aims to build a society where everyone can participate.

<https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk>

Democracy Club

A volunteer-led group of specialist volunteers using technology and collaboration with other organisations to increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of information on election candidates, politicians and democratic processes.

<https://democracyclub.org.uk>

Democracy Matters

Promotes learning for democracy, citizenship, participation and practical politics, particularly among people who have least power in society.

www.democracymatters.org.uk

Disability Action Alliance

Creates partnerships between organisations representing disabled people and those in the public and private sector and community groups.

<http://disabilityactionalliance.org.uk>

Disability Now

For, about and by disabled people, challenging the misrepresentation of disabled people by the mainstream media.

www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Disability Politics

Works to redress the under-representation of disabled people in public and political life.

www.disabilitypolitics.org.uk

Disability Rights International

Promotes the human rights and full participation in society of disabled adults and children.

www.driadvocacy.org

Disability Rights UK

A disabled person-led organisation focused on leading change by empowering people with a disability to live independent lives, gain more career opportunities and to have greater participation as full citizens.

www.disabilityrightsuk.org

HEAR

HEAR is the network of equalities organisations providing knowledge, expertise and a unified voice on equalities on issues that impact London's voluntary and community sector.

<https://hearequality.org.uk>

Inclusion London

Supports Deaf and Disabled People's organisations (DDPOs) in London, providing advice, support, training and resources.

www.inclusionlondon.co.uk

Just Different

A charity that creates positive social attitudes towards disability and difference among children and young people.

<http://justdifferent.org>

Leonard Cheshire Disability

Supports people in the UK and around the world with physical and learning disabilities to fulfil their potential and live the lives they choose - to live independently, contribute economically and participate fully in society.

www.leonardcheshire.org

Livability

Runs a wide and diverse range of services for disabled adults and children helping them to reach their full potential and develop their independence.

www.livability.org.uk

London Voluntary Service Council

Supports London's 60,000 voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.

www.lvsc.org.uk

Mencap

Works with people with a learning disability to change laws and services, challenge prejudice and directly support thousands of people to live their lives as they choose.

www.mencap.org.uk

Scope

Works to ensure disabled people have the same opportunities as everyone else, providing support, information and advice for disabled people and their families, and raising awareness.

www.scope.org.uk

Voluntary Organisations Disability Group

Made up of more than 80 leading voluntary sector and not-for-profit disability organisations, which seeks to influence and develop social care policy, build relationships with government and other key agencies.

www.vodg.org.uk

Campaigns

Bite the Ballot

A not-for-profit, non-party affiliated movement that empowers young people to speak up and make informed decisions at the ballot box.

<http://bitetheballot.co.uk>

#EndTheAwkward

Scope's campaign to get more people talking about awkwardness, sharing their stories and thinking differently about disability. Scope works to make the UK a place where disabled people have the same opportunities as everyone else.

www.scope.org.uk/endtheawkward

Every Vote Counts (A United Response campaign)

Works with people with a learning disability and their supporters to develop information about politics, including how to get involved and to air their views on how the country is run.

www.everyvotecounts.org.uk

Hear My Voice campaign

Gives people with a learning disability and their families the opportunity to speak to their political candidates to help politicians understand the issues that matter to them.

www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaigning/hear-my-voice

Media/internet

BBC Ouch Disability

This award-winning blog is run by a team of disabled journalists who go behind the headlines to reveal news about 'the little details about being disabled that are not widely talked about.'

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02r6yqw

Disability Horizons

Launched by two disabled entrepreneurs, the magazine sources its content entirely from its reader community.

<http://disabilityhorizons.com>

Events

Remember, there are a variety of days, weeks and months each year dedicated to highlighting a variety of specific disabilities. Below, is a small selection of more general events.

Disabled Access Day

A day to celebrate the fantastic access that already exists in places and opportunities for people to try something new.

www.disabledaccessday.com/home

Disability Awareness Day

The world's largest not-for-profit voluntary-led disability exhibition. A pan disability event which promotes a can do culture focussing on what disabled people can do throughout life and work.

www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk

European Local Democracy Week

An annual event across all Council of Europe member states, which features local and national activities. Usually takes place in October with the purpose of fostering knowledge of local democracy and promoting democratic participation at a local level.

www.congress-eldw.eu

Global Accessibility Awareness Day

Takes place in May, aimed at getting people working within design, software, mobile, usability and related technology fields talking about how to respond to the accessibility needs of users with different disabilities.

www.globalaccessibilityawarenessday.org

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

A United Nations day on 3 December to promote a global understanding of issues facing the estimated one billion people living with some form of disability.

www.un.org/en/events/disabilitiesday

#OurDay

24 hours annual social media event in November. Run by the Local Government Association, #ourday highlights and celebrates the diverse work of councils.

www.local.gov.uk/about/news/ourday-day-life-local-government

Parliament Week

A programme of events and activities that connect people with parliamentary democracy in the UK. Coordinated by the House of Commons with support from the House of Lords. In 2015 it runs from 16-22 November.

www.parliamentweek.org

Publications

Access to elected office: a consultation and response

Coalition Government consultation which sought views on proposals for providing additional support for disabled people who are seeking elected positions.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-elected-office-for-disabled-people-a-response-to-the-consultation

Be a Councillor: a guide for disabled people

A Local Government Association guide for disabled people considering standing for election, including information on the role of a councillor, how to become a candidate, and case studies from existing disabled councillors.

www.beacouncillor.co.uk – guide book currently being updated

Disability in the United Kingdom 2016: facts and figures

Report by the Papworth Trust providing key facts and figures about disability in the UK today, covering areas such as employment, health, housing, transport and education. The Papworth Trust provides services and campaigning and works for equality, choice and independence for disabled people.

www.papworthtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/Disability%20Facts%20and%20Figures%202016.pdf

Duty to make reasonable adjustments

Variety of resources from the Equality and Human Rights Commission on the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/multipage-guide/employment-workplace-adjustments

Inclusive Communities: A Guide for Local Authorities

This guide from Disability Rights UK outlines opportunities to develop more inclusive communities and provides examples from local authorities.

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/default/files/pdf/1%20%20InclusivecommunitiesLAguidance.pdf

Lights, camera, action: promoting disability equality in the public sector

From Disability Rights UK with practical tips on how to involve disabled people effectively, create strong action plans and make the most of disability equality impact assessment, along with case studies of public authorities.

<https://www.disability.co.uk/sites/default/files/resources/lightscameraaction.pdf>

Pathways to politics

Equality and Human Rights Commission report to explore the relationship between common pathways into politics and under-representation of groups protected by the Equality Act (2010).

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/research-report-65-pathways-politics

The Purple Pound: making businesses more accessible to disabled people

From the Office for Disability Issues, this guide is aimed at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with a focus on the combined £80 billion potential spending power of people with disabilities.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130812104657/http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/involving-disabled-people/business.php>



Local Government Association

18 Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000

Fax 020 7664 3030

Email info@local.gov.uk

www.local.gov.uk

© Local Government Association, December 2017

For a copy in Braille, larger print or audio,
please contact us on 020 7664 3000.
We consider requests on an individual basis.