

In the new Disability Policy Voting Paper we set out our vision for an equal society, where disabled people of all experiences and backgrounds are able to achieve and prosper. Together we will dismantle the structural barriers so that we can all benefit from the economic and social value of a just and equitable society.

In these times of global uncertainty, it is crucial that we strive for equality and reap the benefits of a fair society. Our governments must strive to create long-term change and create policy designed for the people it aims to serve.

To achieve equality we focus on the most marginalised first, the people who face the greatest barriers and disadvantages. We will be an equal society when disabled people live their lives free from discrimination, violence, and oppression, and can achieve equitable outcomes. Our policy-making recognises how characteristics such as race, ethnicity, faith, disability age, sexuality, and class (family inherited historic earnings and assets) continue to shape access to power, influence, resources, and privilege for the people of Wales and England.

<https://www.disabledpeoplesmanifesto.com/manifesto> (hereafter “DPM”) uses ‘Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs)’

<https://blog.languageline.com/uk/british-sign-language-what-to-expect-in-2023>

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/dec/21/british-sign-language-to-be-offered-as-gcse-subject>

## **From Equality of Opportunity to Equality of Outcome...**

### **Deeds, not words....**

All of the policies created by the Green Party are designed to deliver fairly for all the communities throughout Wales and England. This requires a fundamental shift in the manner in which Westminster and the Senedd function and deliver policy.

Policy-making engages with those with lived experience, allows itself to be held accountable and is open to scrutiny from the citizens that it serves.

## **Background**

### **Economic Development**

Traditional approaches to economic development are not working for disabled people. Inequality is reinforced and recreated by an economy that focuses on GDP as a measure of success and predominantly focuses on investment in traditional ‘dirty’ sectors, mainly dominated by men in positions of power.

The Green Party economy is centred around the importance and value of genuine inclusive growth, tackling inequality and the New Green Deal. We recognise that money spent on social infrastructure is an investment in our economy. Our economy should support disabled people's financial independence, and fairly reward all people for all types of work they do. Work can provide the necessary financial security to eradicate poverty and inequality.

### **Finding a voice when the voice is quiet.**

We deliberately start this policy with the understanding that disabled people belong to a wide variety of communities, and their needs, interests and desires are diverse. We recognise that not all disabled people will be able to work, and for these people, protecting rights to a healthy life worth living is imperative.

### **Our principal driver is fair representation for all.**

So we start with a discussion about people with complex and multiple learning disabilities, in recognising that we have people in all our communities who find it difficult to communicate their needs, and interests, and therefore their needs, interests and desires can be overlooked.

Research conducted in Wales has shown that the amount of day care and provision in place for adults with learning disabilities has halved. This has led in some cases to people being isolated and separated from friends that they have known for years. After Covid different activities have in some cases replaced the old day activities, without consultation with the learning-disabled person, or their advocate. There is a Cross Party Learning Disability Group, which is now consulting, after objections and concerns had been raised. This means that in many cases decisions were already made. The Green Party advocates for a system of co-production, which means that disabled people and their advocates participate in deciding if provision needs to be changed, and in which ways **before** change happens.

All of our policies show due regard to the needs, interests, and desires of disabled people of all ages, and an impact assessment is done on all policies before they are submitted to Conference in order to be approved.

The Rapid Policy Development group also has an impact assessment before it becomes official party policy.

Spokespeople for all policy areas are obliged to consult with the Green Party Disability Policy Working Group or a named person responsible for Disability Rights, if they are speaking about an issue which affects disabled people. If in doubt, co-production of policies is always preferable to consultation after the policy is written.

**The Social Model of disability** is based on the view that it is society which disables. This approach focuses on the need to adapt society to enable (rather than disable)

people with impairments. The barriers to equality arise from the environment such as inaccessible buildings and services, attitudes such as stereotyping, discrimination and prejudice, and also organisations policies and practices. Disability is often imposed on people who are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society.

The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect disabled people and prevent disability discrimination. It provides legal rights for disabled people in the areas of employment, education, access to goods and services, buying and renting land and property and provision by public bodies.

<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010#:~:text=You're%20disabled%20under%20the,to%20do%20normal%20daily%20activities>

The Green Party supports the EU in viewing disability as a social construct and recognises that the link between poverty and disability is well established.

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1137>

## **Social and Political Enablement**

DY400

Article 19 -

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-19-living-independently-and-being-included-in-the-community.html>

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/handbook-for-parliamentarians-on-the-convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

Although the preferred expression is 'disabled person/people' the UN pages persist with 'persons with disabilities'.

DY405: FETD - <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=166&langId=en>

DY408: Equal Power, Equal Voice <https://epev.cymru/application-process/about/> see also

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/discrimination/public-sector-equality-duty/what-s-the-public-sector-equality-duty/>

<https://equalitytrust.org.uk/socio-economic-duty>

## **Economic empowerment**

DY505 refers to UBI and Universal Credit. On legacy benefits:  
<https://www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled>

Note also EC802 provides for pension supplement for disabled people,

DY508-26 <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

**Adequate transport infrastructure** on a local and national basis is essential for enabling disabled people to access work and essential public services and stay connected with communities. Their transport needs may differ. Disabled people are more likely to be dependent on public transport. They are more likely to need shorter and more frequent local journeys due to increased caring responsibilities, trips to medical appointments and an increased likelihood to work closer to home. Poor transport that does not suit the needs of disabled people can cut off their access to higher-paid, better-quality jobs and broaden inequality. This is particularly true of disabled people in more rural areas, where in recent years bus services have decreased. Public transport often assumes disabled people travel with non-disabled people, providing extremely limited space for those who use mobility devices such as scooters or wheelchairs, meaning multiple disabled individuals can often not travel together. This limited space is also seen as a premium for those with prams, oversized luggage, or simply used for standing in times of high traffic on public transport, causing a divide between different users. Safety on public transport and at stations is also a very real concern and is impacted by the removal of ticket offices, which many disabled people use as a cornerstone for their safety and use of public transport. The needs of disabled people should be core to transport provision and design, from buses to trains, active travel settings and stations. These are the priorities of Green Party governance.

## **Disabled People at Risk**

The greatest risks to the prosperity of disabled people have to be addressed. Disabled people face greater risks of poverty, social isolation, and financial hardships. They also remain at significant risk of violence, abuse, and harassment, and are at particular risk of coercion. In the year ending March 2019, the Crime Survey for England and Wales found that almost 1 in 4 (23.1%) disabled adults aged 16 years and over experienced crime (including fraud and computer misuse), compared with 1 in 5 (20.7%) non-disabled adults, with 1 in 7 disabled adults experiencing domestic violence compared with 1 in 20 non-disabled adults. Much abuse experienced by disabled people is invisible, either due to a hesitancy to report hate crime or an inability to do so. Nevertheless, reported disability hate crime rose by 43% in 2022 from 2021. Low conviction and prosecution rates impact many people in society, the data on rape convictions is well recorded, as is racially motivated hate crime, and a lack of accessible processes in reporting crime exacerbates the barriers for disabled people.

Disabled people also receive worse outcomes, including a higher mortality rate from a wide range of hazards and disasters, including COVID-19, flooding, heatwaves and extreme cold. These issues are linked to deep-rooted, cultural, and structural issues, but are also the result of policy failure.

Our social security system does not provide an adequate safety net. Our economy is over-reliant on low-paid, insecure work. Our criminal justice system frequently fails to protect people who experience violence and abuse.

## **Housing**

For many disabled people, home is crucial. Disabled people often spend a larger amount of their time in their homes, for a variety of reasons including a lack of accessibility outside of the home, safety, and personal need. The UK 2021 Disability Survey research report identified that many disabled individuals reported that their homes were not suitable for their needs, impacting their ability to live independently. Most people who had had to make adjustments to their home did not receive funding to do so (only 16% received funding), and many stated that the adjustments that were there were still not sufficient.

Disabled people are more likely to rent than to own their own home. Although their rights are protected under law, and landlords are not able to discriminate against disabled tenants, many disabled people still experience discrimination, and often do not have the resources or support to report it.

<https://www.housing.org.uk/our-work/quality/decent-homes-standard/>

<https://grenfellunited.org.uk/the-issues/grenfell-enquiry-and-recommendations>

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants>

## **Disabled People and personal energy use**

There is a growing attention on individual 'carbon footprints,' which is often used to put the burden of emissions on the individual, rather than institutions, corporations, or governments. As we push for individual change to diets, behaviours, and energy use, we must remain cognisant that disability raises specific needs in these areas. Living with a disability already raises living costs and reduces money available to spend on making changes. Certain disabilities require specific diets which may be more expensive, or outside of carbon appetite. They may also require people to run additional equipment which relies on energy sources which are currently not renewable. Disabled people are already excluded from many climate debates (such as the Israeli Minister Karine Elharrar being unable to access COP26), and also report feeling excluded from movements due to lack of consideration of their needs (such as the drive to ban plastic straws). We must not perpetuate existing exclusion through our transitions.

Until all disabled people are able to live safe, secure, and fulfilling lives we will fail to deliver a fair and equal society. The Disability Policy Working Group is committed to

collaborating with the other Green Party Working Groups to create a coherent set of policies based on the principles of fairness, dignity, and equality.

An illustration of how energy pricing might be made to work under the present tax and social security setup can be gleaned from

<https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/national-energy-guarantee.pdf> especially (re disability) p. 15 and table 9.

**Disability Discrimination Act 1995** (SW601-02) has been repealed and replaced by the Equality Act 2010, except in Northern Ireland where the DDA still applies.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disability\\_Discrimination\\_Act\\_1995](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disability_Discrimination_Act_1995)

<https://www.drc.org.uk/>

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/50/contents>

Most of the SW chapter dates from 2004, so there may be other, less obvious, outdated text in this section. The **National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/19/contents/data.htm> (SW613) is still in force,

but the **Community Care (Direct Payments) Act**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/30/contents> has been superseded. Two

related government web pages: <https://www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled>

<https://www.gov.uk/help-for-disabled-child>