

Easy Read

Access to Politics Toolkit

Information and advice to help you get involved in politics

About this booklet



This is an Easy Read version of: **Access to Politics Toolkit.**



This part of the toolkit gives some important background information about politics, disability and the law.



There are useful contacts at the end.

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About this toolkit



This toolkit is a set of resources and guides.



The aim is to help disabled people take part in politics.



It sets out steps you can follow. And gives the information you need to decide whether to get involved and how.



It was made by members of the **Access to Politics Network**.



The network is a group of disabled people. They share knowledge, skills and support to help more disabled people take part in politics.



You can find out more about the Access to Politics project on our website: disabilitywales.org/projects/access-to-politics

Who this toolkit is for



We follow the **Social Model of Disability**.



The **Social Model** says people are disabled by **barriers** in the world around them.

Barriers can be:



- **Environmental**. Like buildings not having **accessible** toilets.



Accessible means everyone can find, use, enter or understand something.



- **Attitudes.** People's attitudes towards disabled people.



For example, assuming disabled people cannot do certain things.



- **Organisational.** Like a job that does not offer flexible working hours.



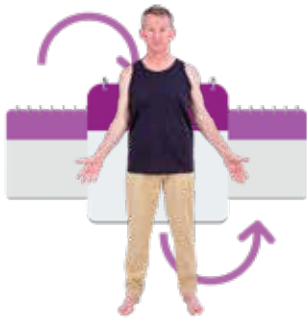
The toolkit is for anyone with an impairment or health condition. Whether you identify as disabled or not.



In the Social Model, an **impairment** and **disability** are different.



An **impairment** is a difference in how someone's body or mind works.



It could be short-term, long-term or even changing from day to day. It could be because you are ill, injured, or have a health condition.



Disability is having fewer chances to take part like others can.



You decide how you identify. You can use this toolkit to make taking part in politics easier.

What is in this toolkit



The toolkit is split into 8 booklets:

Booklet 1

Important information about politics, disability and the law

Booklet 2

Step 1- Choosing whether to take part in politics

Booklet 3

Step 2 – Joining a political party

Booklet 4

Step 3 – Getting involved in party work

Booklet 5

Step 4 – Becoming a candidate for your party

Booklet 6

Step 5 – Being a candidate

Booklet 7

Step 6 – If you win the election

Booklet 8

Standing as an Independent Candidate

Important things to know

Politics



Politics is about how people make decisions for a country or community.



Politics is a way of:

- Making decisions together.
- Solving problems.
- Sharing money, services and **power** fairly.



Power means being able to make decisions.



You do not have to become a politician to make a difference.

You can:



- **Join a local Disabled People's Organisation and help with its work.**



- **Sign a petition.**

A **petition** is a list of people asking for change.



- **Share your views at a consultation.**

A **consultation** is when people ask what you think before making decisions.

Impairments



The **Social Model of Disability** says people are not disabled by impairments or health conditions.



People are disabled **by barriers** in the world around them. **Barriers** are things that stop or make it harder for disabled people to take part.



The Social Model is not a law. The law uses the **Medical Model of Disability**.



This says people are disabled by their impairments or health conditions.



The **Equality Act** protects people with impairments or health conditions. But it does say you have the right to **reasonable adjustments**.



You can use the Equality Act to make sure you get **reasonable adjustments**.



Reasonable adjustments are changes that can be made to remove **barriers** that stop you taking part.

Benefits



Personal Independence Payment also known as PIP, is **not** means tested.



This means it is not given to you based on how much money you earn.



You can get PIP if you have a job.



Universal Credit is means tested. It supports people who do not have much money.



You can get Universal Credit if you have a job.



Always get advice if you are not sure if something will affect your benefits.

The law

The Equality Act



The Equality Act protects disabled people by law. It can help if you are treated unfairly.

To use this law, you must meet its definition of disability. Usually, your condition must:



- last at least 12 months



- make everyday activities much harder.

You can use the Equality Act to:



- ask for **reasonable adjustments**



- challenge unfair treatment.



A **reasonable adjustment** is a change that helps you take part.



An organisation must think about your request for a **reasonable adjustment**.



But they do not have to say yes.



If they say no, they should explain why.



Sometimes you may need to challenge their decision.



There are strict timetables for this. And you will need to do this yourself.



You may need advice or support.



You can find support organisations in the **Useful Contacts** section of this booklet.

Social Model of Disability



The Social Model is an idea, not a law.



It says **barriers** stop disabled people taking part.



It focuses on removing **barriers**. Not fixing people.



The Welsh Government uses the Social Model to help make decisions and plans.

UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People



This is an agreement between different countries across the world. It is about disabled people's rights.



It supports disabled people taking part in politics.



The UK has agreed to follow it. But it is not part of UK law yet.

Politics



Political parties must follow the Equality Act.



A **political party** is a group of people that share the same ideas about how to run the country.



For example, Plaid Cymru, Reform and Labour.



Councils must also follow equality laws.



Councils have extra duties too – they must think about the needs of disabled people.

More information



To find out more contact **Kat Watkins**, the Access to Politics Project Officer:



Website:

disabilitywales.org/projects/access-to-politics



Email:

kat.watkins@disabilitywales.org



Hawdd ei Ddeall Cymru
Easy Read Wales

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Useful contacts

Benefits Advice:

- Citizen Advice Wales - citizensadvice.org.uk/wales
- Turn2us - turn2us.org.uk

Advice about pay:

- Local Government - dbcc.gov.wales/remuneration
- Senedd - remunerationboard.wales

Election information:

- Electoral Commission:
electoralcommission.org.uk/taxonomy/term/212

Main political parties:

- **Green Party Wales** - wales.greenparty.org.uk
- **Plaid Cymru** - partyof.wales
- **Reform UK** - reformparty.uk
- **Welsh Conservatives** - conservatives.wales
- **Welsh Labour** - welshlabour.wales
- **Welsh Liberal Democrats** - libdems.wales

Please note, there are other parties.

Advice for Independent Candidates standing for Local Government:

- **Local Government Association Independent group:**
local.gov.uk/political/lga-independent-group
- **Electoral Commission:**
electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-05/StandingasanindependentcandidateLGW.pdf

Becoming a Member of Senedd:

- senedd.wales/work-opportunities/becoming-a-member-of-the-senedd
- electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-senedd-elections

Becoming a Local Authority Councillor:

- beacouncillor.wales/about-local-councils
- **Local Election Guide:**
electoralcommission.org.uk/our-guidance/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-wales

Becoming a Community or Town Councillor:

- gov.wales/community-and-town-councils-guidance-html
- **One Voice Wales:**
onevoicewales.wales/about

Advice for keeping safe online:

- **Shout Out UK:** shoutoutuk.org/blockingthenoise

Definitions of disability:

- **Social Model of Disability:**
disabilitywales.org/social-model
- **Equality Act:**
legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6
- **UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People:**
ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities

Advice for when you need to stand up against issues:

- **Public Sector Equality duty:**
legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149
- equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/public-sector/public-sector-equality-duty/public-sector-equality-duty-specific-duties
- **Equality and Human Rights Commission:**
equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/human-rights-act
- **Equality Advisory Support Services:**
equalityadvisoryservice.com

Advice for People with a Learning Disability:

- **Learning Disability Wales:**
ldw.org.uk/project/ready-to-vote