

Access to Politics Toolkit

Step 4. Becoming a candidate for your party



About this booklet



This is an Easy Read version of: **Access to Politics Toolkit – Stage 4. Going for Selection.**



This part of the toolkit is about:

- What selection is and what happens.
- How to get ready for it.
- Asking for reasonable adjustments.
- Looking after yourself.



You might need help to read it. You can ask someone you know to help you.

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Selection



To be a **candidate** for your political party, you need to put yourself forward for **selection**.



A **candidate** represents your party in your local area.



Candidates stand for election – when people vote for a candidate to represent their area.



Selection happens inside the party. Members choose who they want their candidate to be.

Selections decides:



- Whether your party chooses you as a candidate.



- Whether you stand in a certain ward, division, or **constituency** – voting area.



- Where you are placed on a list of candidates.



- How far you go in politics.



Selection happens in different ways.

You will have to work through:



- New paperwork.



- Big meetings with lots of jargon words.



It may be unclear what you need to do. It will take a lot of energy and work.



You may not always get the support and changes you need.



The aim of this section is to make selection clearer and easier to do.

Preparing yourself



Before you put yourself forward for selection, take time to prepare yourself.

Understand why you want to stand

**This will help you through difficult moments.
Ask yourself:**



- What change do I want to make?



- What level of responsibility can I handle?



- What kind of campaign could I run?



- How would this fit around my life and my health?



It will help to speak to people who have done it before.

Start making yourself known



People are more likely to vote for people they know and trust. You can:



- Go to important meetings – join online if you need to.



- Email officers about issues you care about.



- Introduce yourself at 1 or 2 events.



- Share ideas in writing if speaking is difficult.



- Use things like Facebook groups or LinkedIn.



- Work on 1 small local issue and share updates.

Ask for reasonable adjustments



You have the right to **reasonable adjustments** at every step.



These are changes that can be made so you can fully take part.

For selection, you can ask for things like:



- More time to speak.



- The rules to be explained clearly.



- Different types of events for people to get to know you.



- Sending your statement – what you stand for, in a video or writing.



- Help filling out forms.



- Documents in different formats, like Easy Read or Large Print.



- Different deadline dates if paperwork is harder for you.



Lots of parties do not know about disabled people's support needs.



You can improve things for everyone by asking.

You can use the **Personal Development Form** in this toolkit to help you talk about your needs.

Putting yourself forward: What you need to do



All parties are different, but these are the things you usually must do.

Check you can go for selection

Depending on your party, you may need to:



- Have been a member for a certain amount of time.



- Live in the local area.



- Pay your membership fees.



- Not have broken any rules or behaved in the wrong way.

Fill out forms



Forms can be hard and tiring. You can ask for help.
It is not cheating!



Forms may ask for:

- Personal details.
- Experience.
- Why you want to stand.
- Skills and values.
- Equality or diversity information – like your age and where you are from.



Write a personal statement



Write an honest and clear statement about:

- Your values.
- Local issues you care about.
- Your experience as a disabled person.
- How you will represent everyone fairly.
- Why you want to be a candidate.

Selection events

You may be asked to:



- Go to hustings –meetings where you will be asked questions



- Answer member questions



- Give short speeches



- Meet with local officers.

Hustings can be scary. You can ask for:



- Extra time to speak.



- To take part online instead of in person.



- Questions before the event, to help prepare how you will answer them.



- To give written answers instead of speaking your answers.



- Quite spaces.



- Changes to lighting and sound.



- Someone to support you and make the changes you need to take part.

Members will vote for the person they want as their candidate. They may vote:



- In person.



- On paper.



- Online.



- By post.



You can ask for changes if any of this is difficult for you.

Looking after yourself during selection



During selection, you will have to deal with:

- More meetings.
- More paperwork.
- More pressure.
- More people looking to you and knowing who you are.
- More stress.



Remember to set rules for yourself. Like only going to the most important meetings and having rest days.



This is not a weakness. It is a way of making sure you can carry on doing the work you need to do.

Protecting yourself



- Write down any issues you have, include the date and what happened.



- Get support from a mentor.



- Use the disability or equality officers – it is their job to make sure you can take part.



- Ask for reasonable adjustments in writing – so there is proof you have asked.



- Remember it is important that you are involved. You belong. Changes for disabled people are good for everyone.

If you are not selected to be the candidate



Many excellent members lose first time.



It does not mean you are not good enough.



You can try again when you have more experience and more support.

If you are selected as the candidate



Congratulations!



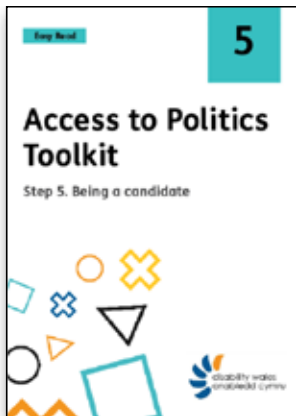
You can now get help from the **Access to Elected Office Fund (Wales)**. This is money that supports disabled people in politics.



You can start planning your **campaign**. This means planning ways to share your main goals and what you stand for.



You will have new duties.



Step 5 of this toolkit will guide you through being a candidate and running a campaign.

More information



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



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