

Access to Politics Toolkit

Step 5. Being a candidate



About this booklet



This is an Easy Read version of: **Access to Politics Toolkit – Stage 5. Becoming a Candidate.**



This part of the toolkit is about:

- Understanding your duties.
- Paperwork.
- Using the Access to Elected Office Fund.
- Communicating.
- Staying safe and healthy.



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

Contents

What it means to be a candidate	4
Access to Elected Office Fund (Wales)	11
Planning your campaign.....	15
Reasonable adjustments for your campaign	19
Looking after yourself during your campaign	23
Using your voice.....	28
Safety	30
After the campaign.....	34
More information.....	36

What it means to be a candidate



When you become a candidate, you represent your party.



Your party has trusted you to do this.



People will think of you when they think about your party. It is a big step.



You will be introduced to your **election agent**.



This is the person who is responsible for making sure your campaign is run properly.

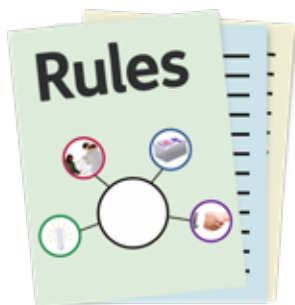


Some election agents are paid. Some are volunteers.

They will:



- Help with legal paperwork



- Make sure your campaign follows the rules



- Make sure you meet all deadlines



- Give you guidance on local election rules.



You are allowed to ask them questions. It can be complicated.

Public attention



People will be interested in who you are.



Local newspapers may ask or find out about who you are.



You may go door to door talking to people in your community.



You may speak to people online.



You will be invited to local groups.



You are allowed to set rules for yourself on how this will happen

Paperwork



Paperwork is a big **barrier** for disabled people.



There will be lots of forms you will need to fill out:

- Nomination forms
- Consent to nomination
- Photo ID or verification documents
- Electoral Commission compliance forms
- Spending and donations forms
- Ward information sheets
- Party specific candidate agreements.



You do not have to deal with these forms on your own.



You can ask for help to read them, explain what they are and fill them out.



Your election agent can fill some out for you. Ask them what they can help with.

Access to Elected Office Fund (Wales)



This fund helps disabled candidates take part in elections.



You can apply as soon as you are chosen as a candidate.



Apply as soon as you can, so you have support ready for your campaign.



The **Access to Elected Office Fund** team can help you apply.



Money from this fund can help you with:



- The costs of a personal assistant or a support worker



- Communication support



- Transport support



- Assistive technology – like screen readers and magnifiers.



- Extra printing



- Extra campaign costs because of support needs



- Support with energy levels and tiredness.



It does not cover:



- Usual campaign costs not linked to your support needs.



- Your party membership fees.



- Support before you are selected as a candidate.



- Everyday living costs.

Planning your campaign



Campaigns can take a lot of work and energy.



You should think about your needs when planning your campaign.

What campaigns involve



- Canvassing – going door knocking to speak to local people. Or speak to people online



- Leafleting – posting leaflets through doors



- Talking to community groups



- Speaking at events



- Posting on social media like Facebook and LinkedIn



- Having your photo taken



- Making sure people know what you stand for



- Going to **debates** or **hustings** – events where you are asked questions



- Managing volunteers.



You do not need to do all of these.

Running a campaign



Know your strengths and what works for you.



For example, do you prefer talking to people online.



Build a good team of people who can support you.



Your team should understand your needs and how best to work with you.

Reasonable adjustments for your campaign



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

Examples:



- Campaign meetings held online



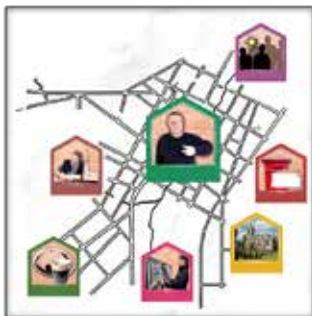
- Shorter canvassing sessions



- Accessible transport



- Extra breaks



- Quiet routes or fewer door-to-door chats



- Someone coming with you to public events



- Social media support



- Using videos to talk about what you stand for



- Accessible debates and hustings – like getting questions before the event to prepare your answers, or extra speaking time.



If you have any problems getting reasonable adjustments:



- Remind people that the changes are not special treatment. It is about including everyone.



- Get support from your party.



- Remember you do not need to ask to look after your health.

Looking after yourself during your campaign



Plan rests – block out time for rest:

- In your daily schedule
- Over your working week
- Before and after events.



Choose campaign work that suits you and your strengths. For example:

- Online question and answer sessions
- Recording videos
- Speaking to people on social media
- Day events instead of evening events
- Canvassing for short amounts of time
- Using supporters to canvas for you.

Mental health



You may face:

- Criticism – people judging you
- Misunderstandings
- Unfair treatment
- Pressure to do more.



You deserve support and kindness. You can set rules that help you look after yourself.



Some disabled candidates worry about:

- Having their photo taken
- Being seen using mobility aids – like wheelchairs, scooters or crutches
- Being questioned about their impairment or health condition.



You control:

- How you tell your story
- What you tell people about yourself
- Who gets to know your personal information.



You do not have to explain your impairment or health condition to everyone.

Using your voice



Your campaign message should be based on you and your life experiences.



Your message should be about:

- What you stand for
- What issues matter to your community
- Your values and the reasons you are standing for election
- How your life experience shapes your politics
- What you hope to achieve.



You do not have to talk about your impairments or health condition. It is your choice.



If you do talk about your impairment, you can share how this has helped you be a stronger candidate. For example:

- Problem-solving skills
- Understanding barriers
- Commitment to inclusion
- Real life knowledge of public services.

Safety



When you are campaigning, you will be in new situations.



Your safety is important. You can set rules like:



- Not canvassing after dark



- Not going into homes or venues that are not easy to access



- Not talking to aggressive or angry people



- Bringing a supporter with you



- Leaving situations that feel unsafe



- Reporting **abuse** or **harassment**. This is when someone is treated very badly by someone else. Or if someone keeps on treating them badly and bothering them.

Online safety

To stay safe online, you can:



- Use scheduled posts – posts you write that are posted at a later time.



- Limit who can comment on your posts



- Ask a trusted person to be in charge of your social media

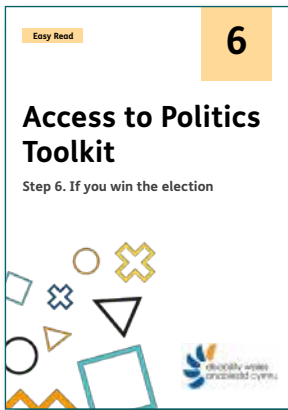


- Block or mute abusive accounts



- Choose not to take part in debates on social media.

After the campaign



If you win, move to step 6 in this toolkit.

If you do not win



Your work, what you did, and what you said is still important.



Not winning does not mean you were not good enough. Or that you should stop trying.



Many successful politicians lose elections before winning.



Your experience will make you stronger if you decide to stand for election again.



If you choose not to run again:

You can:

- Support other candidates
- Help your party write policies and plans
- Join your party's disabled people's groups
- Keep taking part in a way that suits you.

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

[Easy Read Wales](#) made this Easy Read document.
[Click here to tell us what you think.](#)

Photosymbols®
Publisher Licence 403527247