

# A NATIONAL 'DISABILITY EQUALITY' CAMPAIGN

## 1. Introduction

As a nation we have made huge steps tackling issues around inequality and discrimination against disabled people in our society, from passing the historic 1995 Disability Discrimination Act to becoming signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2009 and to defining protections afforded to disabled people under the Equality Act 2010. While progress had been made, disabled people still continue to face discrimination and disadvantage.

The Labour Party is the party of equality and that is why we launched the Disability Equality Roadshow (DER) on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016 in Manchester with the leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn. The principle behind the DER is that future social security policy needs to be co-produced with its stakeholders including disabled people and their carers, service providers and the public at large.

Our aims are to engage with stakeholders and hear their views and experiences of social security policy, in addition to a wide-range of other policy areas. Disabled People Against Cuts proposed the road show and together with Disability Labour, TUC Disability lead, Disabled People's Organisations and Charities have been instrumental in setting up the DER.

The DER will involve deaf and disabled people, their carers and service providers at engagement events across every region of the country, and each nation state. In addition we will ensure anyone who may not be able to attend events in person can still engage with the process online via written, audio or video submissions. Live streaming will also be available for some events.

The DER will start from a position that values our social security system, not denigrates it or its users, and, like the NHS, starts from principles of inclusion, support and security for all, assuring us of our dignity and the basics of life, giving us a hand up, not a hand out, should any one of us become ill, disabled or fall on hard times. It will also be essential to engage with the wider public on what a new social contract will look like.

We are seeking to develop policies that enable disabled people to lead full and rich lives, reflecting a social model of disability, so contributing to our obligations as signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). Labour takes these obligations seriously, which is why we will be travelling across the country to hear your views.

The DER will be supported by the Disability Equality Commission, which will pull together the evidence from all the events as well wider evidence. It will also be responsible for drafting a report on this to Debbie Abrahams, the Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary.

The report and recommendations will be incorporated into our wider policy development process through our National Policy Forum. In conjunction with the DER, we will also be launching Disability Equality Watch (DEW) – a platform for you to share the impacts of this Government’s so-called welfare reforms. You will be able to send us your evidence of the impacts this Government’s social security policies are having on you and your families.

## 2. The Disability Equality Roadshow events

Debbie Abrahams and other members of the Shadow Work and Pensions team will attend each DER event. Approximately 30 DER events will take place over the coming year; information on each event will be published on the Labour Party Policy Forum website. Each event will be free to all participants and open to deaf and disabled people and their carers. Anybody with access needs should specify their requirements at least two weeks before the event.

During the event, there will be a number of round discussion tables where participants will explore their experiences and priorities for change under the following themes:

- Adequate standard of living and social protection
- Health and social care
- Education and training
- Work and employment
- Independent living
- Access to justice
- Participation in cultural, political and public life

These themes reflect articles from the UN CRPD.

### 3. The questions

For anyone who may not be able to attend the events but would like to submit evidence to the DER, you can do this on the Labour Party Policy Forum website as follows:

[policyforum.labour.org.uk/disabilityequality](http://policyforum.labour.org.uk/disabilityequality).

The questions we would like your input on are:

#### Adequate standard of living and social protection:

1. What have your personal experiences of the social security/protection system been?

Points to Consider:

- What are your experiences with Employment and Support Allowance or Incapacity Benefit, Work Capability Assessments, Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance, the Work Programme/Work Choice, Universal Credit or other support?
  - How was the process of applying and being assessed for social security support?
  - What are your experiences of sanctions?
2. What are the three most important things that a Labour government could do to reshape social security so that it is better suited to your needs?

#### Health and Social Care:

3. What have your experiences of health and social care been like?

Points to consider:

- Which health care providers did you see, e.g., GP, nurse, consultant, mental health specialist, occupational health?
- How quickly did you get specialist care?
- What was the process like to get specialist care?

- How would you rate the quality of care you received?
  - What communication did your healthcare providers have with DWP?
  - How did your condition and treatment affect you and your family, including anybody who had to care for you?
4. What are the three most important things that a Labour government could do to ensure the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health of disabled people?

### Education and Training

5. What have your experiences of mainstream/non-mainstream education and training been?

Points to consider:

- How is the reform of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) improving the educational outcomes of disabled children, including Education Health & Care Assessments/Plans?
  - What have your experiences been with post-16 training/experiences such as apprenticeships, further/higher education and vocational courses?
6. What are the three most important things that a Labour government could do to ensure disabled people have access to the same educational and training opportunities as non-disabled people?

### Work and Employment:

7. What have your experiences of work and employment been?

Points to consider:

- How have you found employers and colleagues in relation to your disability?
- What were your experiences of the NHS or occupational health providers in helping you to stay in employment?
- What are your experiences of the DWP in providing social security support to help stay in employment?
- What have your experiences been of asking employers to make reasonable adjustments?

8. What are the three most important things that a Labour government could do to enable sick and disabled people to stay in and/or to return to work?

Independent living:

9. What have your experiences of living independently been?

Points to consider:

- What are your experiences of housing, housing adaptations and independent living?
- What are your experiences of transport, particularly public transport and independent living?
- What are your experiences of social care both formally and informally to help you live independently?
- What have your experiences been of the social security system and how did they impact on your ability to live independently?

10. What are the three most important things that a Labour government could do to ensure disabled people are able to live independently?

Access to justice:

11. What have your experiences of accessing the Civil and/or Criminal justice system been like?

Points to Consider:

- What are your experiences of dealing with the Police for example to report a crime, particularly disability hate crime?
- Have you ever applied for legal aid, what was the experience like?
- What are your experiences with discrimination in employment and employment tribunals or Social security tribunals?

12. What are the three most important things that a Labour government could do to ensure access to justice for disabled people?

Participation in Cultural, Political and Public Life:

13. What have your experiences of participating in cultural, political and public life been?

Points to consider:

- What are your experiences of engaging in sports and other physical activity?
- What are your experiences of engaging with the Arts?
- What are your experiences of political engagement, at a local, regional and national level?

14. What are the three most important things that a Labour government could do to help ensure disabled people are able to participate in cultural, political and public life?

#### 4. And finally

Labour's commitment to people-powered politics means that the DER process involving Deaf and disabled people, carers and service providers, will feed into our National Policy Forum. We are mindful of our commitments to the UN CRPD and are working across our Shadow Teams to incorporate disability issues into all policy development.

Through this consultation we will incorporate your views into evidence-based policies for disabled people.

Together with your help we can transform our social security system, based on the principles of dignity, independence and support.

Debbie Abrahams MP, Shadow Work & Pensions Secretary,

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