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# SPECTRUM NEWS

The Disability Manifesto

General Election 2017

Edited by Robert Droy

**Think you know**  
**Disabled People...**  
**Think Again**

# From the Editor:



Centre for  
Independent  
Living CIC

The Disability Manifesto for the 2017 General Election has been developed by SPECTRUM Centre for Independent Living. It updates our 2015 Manifesto produced in partnership with the South East Network of Disabled People's Organisations (SENDPO). This special edition of SPECTRUM's Newsletter publishes our revised Disability Manifesto in full.

## **Contents:**

Pages 4 to 5: Introduction to the Manifesto.

Pages 6 to 20: Covers the areas of employment, welfare reform, care and support, National Health Service, education, immigration, housing, law and order, political participation and exiting the European Union (Brexit). Under each area covered we call upon all political parties to make commitments to Disabled People.

Pages 21 and 22: Highlights a number of areas where the United Kingdom is failing to meet its convention obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Pages 23 to 27: Provides some background notes.

Pages 28 to 30: References.

This is a very important document and so SPECTRUM and our networks are publishing it widely. SPECTRUM is for example sending the Manifesto to Hampshire and Southampton politicians.

We would encourage Hampshire and Southampton candidates standing for election to contact SPECTRUM for advice about their campaigns and their own Manifesto promises that affect Disabled People (please see contact details on the back cover of this Newsletter).

# **The Disability Manifesto**

## **What Disabled People want from our Political Parties**

### **Introduction**

There are more than 13.3 million Disabled People and people with long-term health conditions in the UK – a very sizeable part of the electorate in 2017.

We believe it is essential for Disabled People's voices to be heard in the debates around the 2017 General Election – not only because they represent a large number of votes but, more importantly, because they are deeply affected by so many of the key issues at the heart of political debate.

Disabled People have a valuable contribution to make, not only to the democratic process, but also to the UK's social and economic well-being. Yet, far too often, our voice is marginalised or ignored altogether. This is thoroughly undemocratic – and is simply not acceptable.

Following the success of the 'Disability Manifesto' in 2015, it was decided that the document should be revised and updated for the 2017 General Election. Many of the themes in the previous manifesto are just as relevant today; however there are new issues such as exiting the European Union (Brexit) that will affect Disabled People's lives.

We would also like to acknowledge the Equality and Human Rights Commission report 'Being Disabled in Britain: A journey less equal' (April 2017) and Disability Rights UK in providing some of the information for the 2017 update.

The 'Disability Manifesto' sets out what we – as Disabled People, citizens and voters – believe to be the key issues in the 2017 General Election and what commitments we would like to see from our political parties.

We encourage everyone to join in the debate on our social media sites using the following hashtags:

#GE2017

#CripTheVoteUK

## Employment

Reducing unemployment – especially long-term unemployment – and making the workplace fully inclusive and accessible to all are both vital to the UK's economic recovery, but many Disabled People face a range of barriers to work and there is a still large and persistent disparity in the employment rates of Disabled People compared to non-disabled People and this gap has widened since 2010/11. Less than half (47.6%) of Disabled People in Britain are in work compared to almost 80% of non-disabled People.

The disability pay gap in Britain continues to widen. In 2015-16 there was a gap in median hourly earnings: Disabled People earned £9.85 compared with £11.41 for non-disabled People.

The next Government needs to address the gap between rhetoric on the need for more Disabled People to work and the lack of effective support for the many Disabled People who want to do so. Supporting Disabled People to work reduces dependence on benefits and increases the number of tax paying citizens contributing to the nation's economy.

**We call on all political parties to commit to halving the employment gap for Disabled People over the course of the next Parliament.**

**We call on all political parties to commit to eradicate the pay gap between Disabled People and non-disabled People.**

**We call on all political parties to commit to double the number of Disabled People benefiting from Access to Work support in the next 3 years.**

**Funding for Access to Work, which is proven to be effective in helping Disabled People to move into work and to stay in work, should be increased.**

**We also call on all political parties to commit to ensuring that Disabled People with complex support requirements have equal access to all employment support programmes.**

## Welfare Reform

The policies of austerity have hit Disabled People particularly badly. Since the Government's Emergency Budget in 2010, Disabled People have seen massive cuts to their benefits and support services, including £18 billion from the benefits budget.

More Disabled People than non-disabled People are living in poverty. Welfare reforms have had a particularly disproportionate, cumulative impact on Disabled People's rights to live independently and enjoy an adequate standard of living

UK data from 2015/16 shows that 26% of families where at least one member is disabled were living in poverty compared with 20% of families with no disabled members.

Across the UK, 18.4% of Disabled People aged 16-64 were considered to be in food poverty in 2014 compared with just 7.5% of non-disabled People. Disabled People over the age of 65 were twice as likely as non-disabled People in the same age group to be in food poverty: 6.8% compared with 3.3%.

Disabled People and Carers have already experienced a drop in income of £500 million since 2010 and most recently, one calculation is that with six simultaneous welfare cuts taking place, up to 3.7 million Disabled People will lose £28.3 billion of support by 2018. Twice as many Disabled adults live in persistent poverty compared with non-disabled adults.<sup>i</sup>

When the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) was introduced to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA), the distance that a person was unable to walk in order to qualify for the enhanced mobility component and crucially access to Motability funding, was reduced from 50 metres to 20 metres.

Analysis of previously-released official data by Muscular Dystrophy UK shows that the number of people eligible for Motability funding has fallen in half during the reassessment process for PIP. Of the 254,200 people who were eligible for Motability funding under DLA who were reassessed for PIP by 31 October 2016, 126,300 people have lost access. 51,000 people have already returned their Motability funded cars.

These changes represent a serious threat to independence, social inclusion and quality of life. There are also serious risks to the economy with more Disabled People dropping out of work or education leading to increased poverty and isolation, with the associated health risks. This will inevitably lead to rising costs elsewhere, such as unemployment benefits, social care and the NHS.

What is even more unfair is that Disabled People are taking a bigger 'hit' from the cuts than any other group in society. A recent report by the Centre for Welfare Reform found that Disabled People, who make up 8% of the population, are being hit by a massive 29% of all cuts being implemented.<sup>ii</sup> This cannot be allowed to continue.

**We call on all political parties to commit to undertaking, at the earliest opportunity, a cumulative impact assessment of the impact which welfare reform, changes to social care funding and eligibility criteria and the closure of the ILF will have on Disabled People. All further cuts to welfare benefits for Disabled People should be put on hold until this assessment has been completed.**

**We further call on all political parties to commit to a government-led inquiry into the incidence of suicides amongst Disabled People linked to benefit sanctions and to cuts in services.**

**We also call on all political parties to commit to guarantee that no Disabled People will lose vital support as a result of the change from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and to reverse the change to the 20 metre rule.**

## Care and Support (Social Care)

Social care is vital for Disabled People and Older People to be able to live full and active lives, while receiving the support they require. The next Government will need to prioritise investment in care and support if we are going to have any chance of meeting the aspirations of the many people who depend on it.

Yet at a time when demand is increasing, Disabled People are also having to deal with big cuts in public services, especially care and support - including the closure of the Independent Living Fund, which provides vital support to thousands of Disabled People.

Adult social care in England is in crisis. Between 2009/10 and 2014/15 funding fell by 9% in real terms and 400,000 fewer Disabled People received publicly funded care. Social care has already seen £8 billion in cuts. While some local councils have been able to use efficiency savings to protect public services from the impact of budget reductions, the capacity to make further reductions without impacting on front-line services is now running out. We are already seeing direct withdrawal of services, with more to come.

The Health Foundation estimated the social care funding gap to be in the region of £2.4bn in 2017/18, rising to £2.8bn by 2019/20

For Disabled People who rely on support to live their lives, the consequences are potentially devastating. These cuts create a real risk to their independence, social inclusion and equality of opportunity and raise the prospect of a return to the dark old days of placing people who need support in care homes. This would be nothing short of disastrous. It does not make economic sense in the long run either as making people more dependent will inevitably increase costs further down the line for other services like health care and housing support.

An alarming number of incidents have also occurred in which Disabled and Older People in health and social care settings have been subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment and abuse.<sup>iii</sup> This should never happen in a modern civilised society.

**We call on all political parties to work together to develop a cross party solution to the social care funding crisis; a solution that is long term, sustainable and ensures that those in most need of social care do not have to shoulder the majority of the cost.**

**We call on political parties to recognise that the social care system is for Disabled People of working age, Disabled Children, as well as for Older People. These different constituencies will have different needs and aspirations, and political parties should develop policies which meet the challenges and ambitions of these differing needs.**

**We call on all political parties to fund local authorities adequately to ensure they can provide the care and support services to enable local residents to live independently.**

**We also call on all political parties to commit to increase the funding for social care in line with the EU average as soon as public finances allow. Spending on social care in Britain currently lags well behind, at just 0.9% of GDP, compared to an average of 2% in comparable EU countries.**

**We also call on all political parties to commit to guarantee the safeguarding of Disabled People in care settings and to legislate to introduce a new criminal offence of ill-treatment or willful neglect of people in health and social care settings.**

## The NHS

Disabled People, particularly People with Learning Difficulties or Mental Health Conditions, experience significant and persistent health inequalities and are likely to die younger than other people.<sup>iv</sup> They are also much less likely to receive health checks, screening tests and other routine healthcare treatment.

Disabled People are less likely to report positive experiences in accessing healthcare services.

Despite a commitment by the Government to make improvements to the provision of mental health services, considerable shortcomings remain. Disabled adults are more likely to report poor mental health and wellbeing than non-disabled adults.

There is also considerable evidence of low levels of disability awareness among NHS staff, inadequate healthcare treatment<sup>v</sup> and access barriers to health services.<sup>vi</sup>

**We call on all political parties to commit to eliminating health inequalities faced by Disabled People by 2025. This is a challenging target but one that can be achieved if the will is there to do so.**

**We also call on all political parties to commit to ensuring that Disabled People are able to access NHS services on an equal basis as everyone else. This can be achieved as part of a wider improvement programme – particularly in primary care, where many people face difficulty accessing services because of restricted opening times and procedures.**

**We also call on all political parties to commit to ensuring that mental health services are given equal priority to physical health services in the NHS.**

**We also call on all political parties to guarantee to close, within the first year of the next Parliament, the remaining hospitals in England where People with Learning Difficulties are still being sent, despite promises to end the practice in the wake of the Winterbourne View abuse scandal.**

## Education

Education is vital for all citizens – including Disabled People - to achieve their full potential, participate equally in society and play their part in economic growth. Disabled People are more likely to have poorer educational outcomes at all stages of education, particularly during their school years,<sup>vii</sup> while deficiencies in language competence of teaching staff contribute to particularly poor outcomes for Deaf Children. Research into school exclusions across the UK has also identified that Disabled Children are more likely to be excluded from school, sometimes unlawfully.<sup>viii</sup> Furthermore, there is a need to address bullying experienced by Disabled Children and the levels of support they are offered.

In England and Wales, in 2014/15 the educational attainment of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) was nearly three times lower than for non-disabled children. Across Britain in 2015/16, Disabled young people aged 16-18 were at least twice as likely as their non-disabled peers to not be in education, employment or training (NEET).

Although the qualification gap between Disabled and non-disabled People narrowed between 2010/11 and 2015/16, the proportion of Disabled People with no qualifications was nearly three times that of non-disabled People in 2015/16, and the proportion of Disabled People with a degree remained lower than that of non-disabled People.

**We call on all political parties to commit to reducing the gap in educational outcomes for Disabled school leavers and achieving parity of access to further or higher education for Disabled People by 2025. This is a challenging target but one that can be achieved, if the will is there to do so.**

**We also call on all political parties to commit to delivering a fully inclusive education system with a range of mainstream and specialist provision to meet the needs of all Deaf and Disabled Students.**

**We also call on the next Government to carry out an urgent review of exclusions of Disabled Children and those with additional needs, and commit to ending unlawful exclusions.**

## Immigration

Immigration has become a very divisive issue over recent years but migration from both the EU and further afield has played a valuable role in the UK's social and economic wellbeing.

Many economic migrants – both skilled and unskilled - make a crucial contribution to the health and social care economy, which many Disabled People rely on for support.

In the NHS approximately 30 per cent of doctors and 40 per cent of nurses are born outside the UK.<sup>ix</sup> In social care, the proportion of migrant workers can be even higher. According to the British Medical Association (BMA), without the contribution of non-British staff, "many NHS services would struggle to provide effective care to their patients".<sup>x</sup>

With the UK exiting the European Union, there is considerable concern that this struggle will be made more difficult.

Cultural diversity also potentially contributes to creating a more tolerant society, to the benefit of all – but this is being undermined by increasingly toxic political and public debates about immigration.

In addition, armed conflict in many parts of the world is causing death and injury to innocent people. Disabled People caught up in these conflicts are likely to suffer great hardship. Humanitarian aid should ensure that help is offered in an inclusive manner and Disabled People receive the support they need.

**We call on all political parties to promote a more constructive and inclusive approach to immigration, which recognises the social and economic benefits of immigration and cultural diversity.**

**We call on all political parties to ensure that Disability Equality is built into any plans for overseas aid and providing humanitarian aid in war and conflict regions.**

**We also call on all political parties to commit to ensuring that Disabled Asylum Seekers displaced as a result of conflict or political oppression will always be treated sympathetically by the UK immigration authorities.**

## Housing

There is a severe shortage of accessible housing across the UK<sup>xi</sup> and no mechanism in the planning system to rectify this. As a result many Disabled People struggle to secure suitable housing and this, in turn, creates additional strain on public services such as health and social care. It is also a barrier to social mobility, which is bad news for the economy.

Many Disabled People require a second bedroom for a personal assistant or carer to stay overnight or to store disability related equipment. This has meant a higher proportion of Disabled People have been affected by the under-occupancy charge ('bedroom tax') than non-disabled People, as evidenced in the Department for Work and Pension's Equality Impact Assessment. In England and Wales, at least 47% of housing benefit claimants affected by the under-occupancy charge are Disabled People.

**We call on all political parties to introduce legislation in the next Parliament to require all new housing developments to be built to lifetime home standards, with at least 10% of new housing to be fully wheelchair accessible.**

**We also call on all political parties to urgently amend the rules on housing benefit under-occupancy charge to prevent housing benefit being cut for Disabled People who have a legitimate need for a second bedroom.**

## Transport

Many Disabled People still face significant barriers to accessible transport, particularly public transport. This has a negative impact on all aspects of daily life, including participation in education or training and employment. This restricts choice and life opportunities, and it is bad news for the economy as Disabled People are unable to play their part as full and active citizens.

**We call on all political parties to commit to an urgent review of the effectiveness of legislation and public initiatives aimed at improving access to transport (including bus, rail, taxi and transport by air and sea) for Disabled People and to set out what steps they will take in Government to ensure compliance with the UK's obligations on accessible transport under the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons.**

## Law and Order

Many Disabled People face significant difficulty securing equality of access to the Criminal Justice System and have been disproportionately affected by cuts to legal aid. Deaf People who use British Sign Language (BSL) are also disproportionately denied access to justice as a result of lack of communication support.

Changes to legal aid in England and Wales have negatively affected Disabled People's access to justice in family law, housing, employment, debt and welfare benefits cases. Across Great Britain, there has been a 54% drop in employment tribunal claims on grounds of disability discrimination between 2012/13 and 2015/16.

Disabled People in Britain are more likely to have experienced crime than non-disabled People. In England and Wales, Disabled People were more likely to feel unsafe walking alone in their local area during the day, and were more likely to report feeling worried about physical attack and acquisitive crime compared with non-disabled People.

Disability hate crime is also a major concern. Disability hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales increased by 44% in 2015/16 on the previous year and, while some progress has been made in relation to recording of disability hate crime, prosecution and conviction rates remain unacceptably low.

In schools, Disabled Pupils are nearly three times more likely as other pupils to experience bullying and harassment.

**We call on all political parties to set out the steps they would take in Government to improve access to the legal system for all Disabled People.**

**We also call on all political parties to set out what steps they would take in Government to improve the reporting and prosecution of disability-related Hate Crime and to tackle disability-related harassment and bullying in schools.**

## **Political participation**

Being able to participate in democratic elections is one of the most important rights in a free society. Many Disabled People are still prevented from playing their full part in the democratic process because of access barriers such as inaccessible polling stations or the lack of political campaign information in accessible formats, such as Braille or British Sign Language (BSL).

This is inexcusable in a country that prides itself as being one of the beacons of democracy in the world.

**We call on all parties to make a firm commitment to ensure that all of their campaign meetings and election materials are accessible to Disabled People during the forthcoming election.**

**We also call on the Government to guarantee that all polling stations will be accessible so that no Disabled Person who wishes to vote is prevented from exercising their democratic right.**

## Exiting the European Union

SPECTRUM campaigned for the UK to stay in the European Union during last year's referendum campaign. We do respect the result of the referendum, however we remain concerned about the effect Brexit will have on the lives of Disabled People.

There is a concern that the negotiations will focus purely on trade and economic issues and other issues such as human rights and equality will be forgotten about.

Our social care system relies on many personal assistants and care workers who come from European countries. They may not be traditionally considered as 'highly skilled' but they are 'highly valued' as they enable Disabled People and Older People to remain in their own home.

Many European regulations ensure that services are inclusive and accessible to Disabled People. These range from transport to online services.

It is also important that Brexit does not overwhelm the next government so that other urgent issues such as the NHS and social care do not get overlooked.

### **We call on the political parties to commit to the following actions in relation to Brexit:**

- **All EU-based disability rights existing at the time Britain leaves the EU to be maintained**, including those in relation to air and ship travel, web accessibility, accessible goods and services, public procurement and manufactured goods
- **Maintenance of existing disability rights at the time of exit**, including primary legislation remaining unchanged unless there has been detailed parliamentary scrutiny (i.e. no Henry VIII clauses which would permit change without scrutiny); and secondary legislation to be left in place with no watering down and no inadvertent discarding of, for example, disability equality rules and regulations as 'red tape' .

- **Continued Government commitment to the UK being ahead of the curve on disability rights** – fully committing to implementing standards equivalent to the new European Accessibility Act once passed, building human rights clauses into future trade agreements and at least matching future progressive developments in EU disability rights law.
- **At least matching current EU funding in real terms of Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) and disability rights** – this includes EU funding that supports a) Disabled People's participation and voice b) independent living c) other UN Convention rights and d) research on issues of importance to Disabled People to be matched by the UK Government, with particular attention given to parts of the UK where loss of EU funding will damage the DPO sector.
- **A full equality impact assessment by Government of plans for freedom of movement**, before those plans are agreed, ensuring no disproportionate impact on a) Disabled EU citizens living in the UK b) carers c) Disabled British citizens living in other EU countries and d) no detrimental impact on Disabled People's independence through reducing the PA workforce. This must involve detailed parliamentary scrutiny and public consultation on plans for EU citizens in the UK in terms of rules about 'self-sufficiency' and requirements for 'comprehensive health insurance'
- **Continued mutual recognition initiatives useful to Disabled People** - for instance, badges to enable Disabled People to park and cards offering other access and benefits.
- **Giving the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) heightened status in domestic UK law** - increasing the influence and impact of the UNCRPD on tackling discrimination and advancing equality.
- **Continued commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights**

## **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities investigation throughout 2017 will assess what steps the UK has taken to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Committee is a body of experts, nominated and elected by governments, the majority of whom are Disabled People.

The Committee is reviewing the United Kingdom's (UK) progress in implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – which the UK signed in 2009.

A range of disability rights groups have submitted a “shadow report” to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities after extensive consultation with Disabled People.

It argues that there is “little evidence that the UK government is consistently taking account” of the convention in developing policy and making decisions – and that ministers explicitly rejected it in developing key legislation such as the Care Act 2014.

- With many health, social care and public transport services now devolved to local, regional or national organisations, the Government should do more to ensure public bodies and providers adhere to the convention.
- Access problems in buildings, on the street and public transport frustrate many Disabled People and prevent them playing a full part in the community and earning a living.
- More children in ‘special schools’ rather than mainstream education – aggravated by the failure to provide clear guidance on education and the public sector equality duty.
- Rapidly growing use of compulsory detention and forced treatment powers contained in mental health legislation that are incompatible with the UN convention.

- A massive shortfall in housing that meets the needs of Disabled People; and, for many, no security of tenure.
- The loss of investment in health and social care services which support Disabled People to live independently.
- Inadequate or no investigations into unexpected deaths of Disabled People in the care of the State – particularly those with Learning Difficulties or with Mental Health Issues.
- Delays in implementing requirements for reasonable adjustments that allow Disabled People to work and use services.
- Concerns about the level of hate speech and hate crime.
- A tendency by public bodies to focus on processes rather than meaningful outcomes when fulfilling their legal duty to eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

**We call on all political parties to state a firm commitment to ensuring full compliance with the UK's obligations under the UNCRPD and to set out what steps they will take in Government to address those areas where the UK is found by the UN Committee to not be fully compliant.**

## **Background notes**

### **Employment**

Over 50% of working age people who are out of work are Disabled People (either unemployed or economically inactive).

The economically inactive rate for working age Disabled People is 44.3%. This figure is nearly 4 times higher than for non-disabled People (11.5%).

The unemployment rate for Disabled People is 12%, compared to 7.6% of non-disabled People.

Access to Work is proven to be effective, but it serves only 35,000 people a year compared to 3.3 million Disabled People of working age. For every £10,000 the Government spends on welfare benefits, only 92 pence is spent on ATW.

Latest figures show only 18% of Disabled People on the Work Programme have moved into employment compared to 35% of non-disabled people.

The Government accepted in full recommendations from the Sayce Review in 2011, designed to double the numbers supported by Access to Work. This has not happened. In fact there are 2,000 less people on ATW than there were in 2009-10.

In 2015-16 there was a gap in median hourly earnings: Disabled People earned £9.85 compared with £11.41 for non-disabled people. Disabled young people (age 16-24) and Disabled women had the lowest median hourly earnings.

### **Welfare Reform**

The Local Government Association (LGA) estimate that the income of households claiming benefit will be on average lower by £1,615 a year – or £31 a week – in 2015/16 as a result of welfare reforms (excluding the impact of Universal Credit).

According to a report from Sheffield Hallam University, when the present welfare reforms have come into full effect, they will take nearly £19bn a year out of the economy. This is equivalent to around £470 a year for every adult of working age in the country, but sickness and disability claimants will be hit by several different elements of the reforms.<sup>xii</sup>

The Government's own figures on the change from DLA to PIP reveals nearly one million Disabled People undergoing reassessment will lose some or all of their DLA support by 2018. Of those who will be re-assessed, 510,000 on DLA will receive a lower award under PIP, and 450,000 on DLA will receive no award at all under PIP. Scope have estimated that the figure will be 607,000.

Analysis of previously-released official data by Muscular Dystrophy UK shows that the number of people eligible for Motability funding has fallen in half during the reassessment process. Of the 254,200 people who were eligible for Motability funding under DLA who were reassessed for PIP by 31 October 2016, 126,300 people have lost access.

51,000 people have already returned their Motability funded cars.

There is a range of research highlighting the disproportionate impact of the changes to welfare benefits on Disabled People across the UK<sup>xiii</sup> and the reduction in incomes and services.<sup>xiv</sup>

The European Committee of Social Rights has expressed concern that these reforms will lead to an increase in poverty amongst Disabled People.<sup>xv</sup>

Poverty figures from DWP and the National Statistics Office (NSO) in 2013 revealed that 40% of Disabled children are already living in poverty and a third of Disabled adults are living in poverty.<sup>xvi</sup> This extends to families too; working-age adults are almost twice as likely to have low incomes if their family has a Disabled member.<sup>xvii</sup> 31% of families with Disabled children are going without food and 33% are going without heating.<sup>xviii</sup>

The Government has resisted the calls to carry out a cumulative impact assessment, arguing that that modelling difficulties prevent

it from undertaking an assessment that would be sufficiently robust. However, there is a substantial body of evidence that shows this can be done.<sup>xix</sup>

## **Care and Support**

Half a million Older and Disabled People who would have received social care five years ago are no longer eligible to receive appropriate support.<sup>xx</sup>

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services in England say that they have already had to cut 20% of their budgets for Adult Social Care since 2010 - at a time when pressures are increasing as the number of older and Disabled adults continues to grow at 3% per year.

According to the Centre for Welfare Reform in 2013, Disabled People needing social care have lost an average of £6,409 in income or support per year as a result of the cuts.<sup>xxi</sup>

Real terms spending on social care has fallen by around £770 million since 2010 and organisations supporting Disabled People have seen a steep rise in the length of time people are waiting for care home places, home care and home adaptations. A report by Scope in 2013 found that 40% of people using social care don't have basic needs met like washing, dressing or getting out of the house. 47% said the services they received do not enable them to take part in community life, like seeing friends or volunteering.<sup>xxii</sup>

## **Education**

The latest published figures for numbers of Disabled students in higher education, for the academic year 2001/2, show 4.6% of the student population had a declared disability.<sup>xxiii</sup> In further education, the figure for the academic year 2000/1 was just over 6%.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Only one in twenty Disabled People are in further or higher education, compared to one in ten of the rest of the population and, according to the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

only half as many Disabled People are entering higher education as would be expected according to general population trends.<sup>xxv</sup>

## **Housing**

Two-thirds of Housing Benefit claimants affected by the under occupancy deduction are Disabled People.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Although the Government has stated that Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) can be awarded to people facing hardship in paying their rent, there are inconsistencies in the eligibility rules and how different local authorities apply them. The DHP is, in any case, only a transitional measure so help with rent payments in the future cannot be guaranteed.<sup>xxvii</sup>

## **Law and Order**

In 2011/12 there were 1,744 Disability hate crimes reported to the police in England and Wales.<sup>xxviii</sup>

A survey by Mencap found that nearly 9 out of 10 people with Learning Difficulties had been victims of hate incidents or crimes.<sup>xxix</sup>

The EHRC inquiry into disability-related harassment, carried out between 2009 and 2011, found that harassment was a commonplace experience for Disabled People and that a culture of disbelief and systemic institutional failures were preventing it from being tackled effectively.<sup>xxx</sup>

The EHRC disability harassment inquiry also reported that whilst over four-fifths of Disabled pupils report being bullied compared to under two-thirds of non-disabled pupils, bullying on the basis of disability was often not acknowledged as an issue by schools or local authorities.<sup>xxxi</sup>

## **Political participation**

At the last General Election in 2010, the Polls Apart campaign by the charity Scope surveyed disabled voters at almost 1,000 polling stations across the UK, and found that 67% had one or more

significant access barriers. This is only a 1% improvement from the previous General Election and 2% from the General Election of 2001.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Despite the widespread assumption that postal voting is the most accessible way of voting for Disabled voters, almost half of Disabled voters who used the postal voting system reported one or more significant access problems.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

While a number of accessibility measures have been brought in to make voting easier, including large print ballots and tactile voting devices, these are often poorly publicised and many Disabled People do not know they can ask polling station staff for help. Some polling station staff may also be unaware of their obligations to assist Disabled voters, with people with Learning Difficulties, for example, reporting that they have been turned away.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

As a result, for some groups of Disabled People, such as People with Learning Difficulties, turnout is extremely low, with only an estimated 15-30% voting in the last two elections.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39683/1/blogs.lse.ac.uk-Mencap\\_and\\_the\\_Get\\_my\\_vote\\_campaign.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39683/1/blogs.lse.ac.uk-Mencap_and_the_Get_my_vote_campaign.pdf)

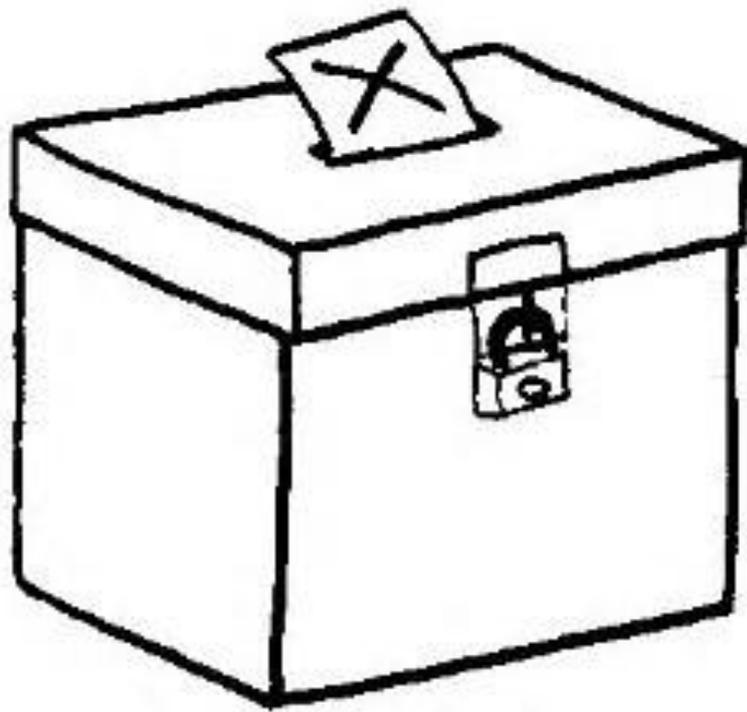
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