

Disability
Agenda
Scotland

DAS

Manifesto 2011: Equal Lives?



About Disability Agenda Scotland

Founded in 1998, Disability Agenda Scotland (DAS) is an alliance of Scotland's major disability organisations. Together our experience, expertise and interests cover physical disability, sensory impairment, learning disability, challenging behaviour and mental health problems.

Working closely with the thousands of disabled children, young people and adults, families and carers involved with the member organisations, DAS aims to:

- Influence public policy and legislation
- Provide a forum for decision makers and influencers to obtain advice and information.
- Promote a better understanding of the diverse experiences, needs and aspirations of disabled people.

DAS aims to promote the interests of disabled people whose views have difficulty reaching into the mainstream of public policy. This may be because people are not involved in consultation processes, are not included in or have no influence on lobby groups, have communication support needs which are not met or are poorly understood, or they may simply not be asked.

Members of Disability Agenda Scotland are: Capability Scotland; ENABLE Scotland; RNIB Scotland (Royal National Institute of the Blind, Scotland); RNID Scotland– Action on Hearing Loss; SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health); and Sense Scotland.

This document is available in alternative formats on request.



Introduction

Why does disability matter for the 2011 Scottish Election?

1 in 5 of the Scottish population is disabled – that's 1 million people. They are a powerful voting lobby; 96% intended to vote in the 2010 election and disabled people and carers were more likely than average to vote at the last Scottish elections¹.

Disabled people's rights and opportunities are, however, under threat as a result of the unprecedented economic conditions. They are finding it harder to gain employment, education or simply a meaningful home life.

Whilst the source of these problems may be world-wide, and equalities and welfare benefits are matters reserved for Westminster, the way policies are implemented in Scotland makes a fundamental difference to the lives of disabled people.

Disability Agenda Scotland believes that the next Scottish Government has the power, and the responsibility, to pursue policies that underpin the rights of, and create more opportunities for, disabled people.

In this publication we explain the four approaches we believe the Government must take to achieve this. We have also included important facts about Scottish disabled people and estimates of the prevalence of disabled voters by Scottish constituency.

This manifesto outlines why disability really matters in the 2011 Scottish Election. The people's stories it tells are real.

Joan is in her mid-sixties. She lived in a long-stay hospital for many years but now has her own home of which she is very proud.

Joan needs a lot of support with learning and communication and has round the clock staff who provide that. She is delighted to get out for walks with her dad and was recently able to say "goodbye" to him.

Her dad is over the moon: he'd never heard Joan speak before.

¹ Capability Scotland (2010) *Voting intentions* & Capability Scotland (2007) *Polls Apart*



Approach 1: A Charter for Disabled Citizens

Powers devolved to the Scottish Government significantly influence the rights, opportunities and life-chances of Scotland's disabled people. Education, health and social care, housing and employment support programmes, amongst others, all impact on the day-to-day lives of disabled people.

Progress has been made. Fewer disabled people are institutionalised and this move towards independent living has resulted in a more inclusive Scottish society. A change as simple as making disabled parking bays enforceable has made every day life easier for many.

Nevertheless, more needs to be done. We still live in a society where:

- Half (49%) of Scottish households including someone with a disability have net annual incomes below £15,000²
- More than half (52%) of disabled people are unemployed³
- Nearly 1 in 5 (19%) disabled people who require an adapted home live in one that is 'not at all' or 'not very' suitable⁴
- Only a small minority of NHS audiology clinics for people with hearing loss are fitted with induction loops to assist those with hearing aids⁵
- Those materially affected by the economic climate are up to 8 times more likely to have sought help for depression and anxiety⁶

The problem is that many disabled people are unaware of their rights, either in relation to access to goods and services, or civil and political rights. They therefore do not ask for them to be enforced.

DAS
calls for:

A Charter for Disabled Citizens which, in line with the Scotland Act, outlines the rights disabled people have and what to do if these are not met.

² Scottish Government *Scottish Household Survey 2007/2008*

³ Scottish Government (2010) *News release: Helping disabled people into work*

⁴ Scottish Government *Scottish House Condition Survey 2008*

⁵ Edmond, F (2011) *Hear me out*. RNID

⁶ SAMH (2009) *Crunch Time for Scotland's Mental Health*



Approach 2: Focus on prevention

The tough financial times are encouraging the public sector to adopt aggressive approaches to reducing costs. Disability Agenda Scotland is concerned at the short-term effect on disabled people and the long-term effect on the Scottish economy of these measures.

At the heart of our concern is the removal of early intervention and preventative services that support disabled people and stop them from developing greater needs. Often preventative services can provide a more cost-effective approach, as well as being a better response for individuals, families and groups involved.

Removing these services is short-sighted. It will result in more disabled people becoming more socially isolated and incur a long-term adverse economic effect. The Scottish local authorities' own advisory body on efficiency, quality and accountability, The Improvement Service, agrees:

'Outcome based working and accountability encourages a shift to early intervention and preventative measures, in order to minimise the risk of deeper and more complex problems developing in people's lives later⁷.'

Disability Agenda Scotland also believes the Scottish Government has a duty to help prevent the radically changing face of benefits and care charging practices pushing disabled people into financial hardship. These, along with the abolition of care funding arrangements such as the Independent Living Fund, require a new joined-up approach to advice and support for disabled people and carers.

DAS
calls for:

Public recognition of the value of preventative spending to both disabled people and the economy

A national income maximisation service to be funded to assist disabled people to maximise their benefit income and minimise the effect of social care charging, the cost of specialist equipment provision and other additional daily living costs they face

⁷ The Improvement Service (2010) *Long Term Financial Planning*



Approach 3: Implement rights, not cuts

The demand for care and support services is increasing as the number of older people with care needs grows and profoundly disabled people live longer. The supply of financial resources to meet this need is reducing as a result of the difficult economic climate.

Disability Agenda Scotland is deeply concerned at the actions being taken by some local authorities to address this pressure:

- Policies developed for older people are being adopted for disabled people, restricting resources to those with the most severe needs⁸. Yet ageing is not the same as disability. People have needs, and it is these needs - important to and identified by the individual- which should be met, whatever the cause.
- Financial targets have been set for reductions in social care expenditure of 20% or more in some local authorities. There is no equivalent reduction in disabled people's needs.
- While DAS backed the introduction of Self Directed Support, a Scottish Government policy aimed at empowering disabled people, it has instead been used as a mechanism to remove services from disabled people.
- Disabled people and carers' needs are not being correctly assessed and in some cases this assessment of need is being unlawfully overridden by a focus on available budget.
- Carers have seen the definition of respite care being widened by the Scottish Government. Activities which have not been specifically arranged for the purpose of respite are now included, which means that local authorities can say they are providing more respite than previously when, in reality, they are not.

Yet whilst the wider population benefits from free health care and now free prescriptions, disabled people are still charged for support they receive with basic tasks such as going to the toilet, washing and eating.

⁸ This is being accomplished through the adoption for working age disabled people of the Scottish Government's *National Standard Eligibility Criteria and Waiting Times for the Personal and Nursing Care of Older People*

Disabled people and carers were at a significant disadvantage in society before the financial crisis. Disability Agenda Scotland does not believe that disabled people should bear an equal share of the financial cuts.

Mairi* is leaving school in June. She has complex support needs, uses a wheelchair and lives at home.

Mairi was assessed as requiring 5 days support per week, but due to financial constraints, the family has been told she will only get 3 days. There has been no change to her assessed needs and the family has simply been told that 'no one will get more than 3 days'.

No carer's assessment was offered to ascertain how the family will be able to cope with this level of support to their relative.

** Not her real name*

DAS
calls for:

The performance of local authorities in meeting the assessed needs of disabled people and carers to be monitored and action taken against those who are not meeting their duties under social work and human rights legislation

A reassessment to be made of the policy of ring-fencing health funding whilst allowing social care funding to diminish



Approach 4: Value the voluntary sector

The voluntary sector provides around one third of the care and support services registered with Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS). Disability Agenda Scotland members between them provide over £100m worth of services in Scotland.

SCSWIS's predecessor, the Care Commission, found that voluntary sector service providers outperformed the public and private sectors⁹. It reported in March 2011¹⁰ that voluntary sector support services for adults are improving faster than similar services within the private or public sector.

Despite this, voluntary sector providers are routinely seeing funding cuts of 20% and more. Disability Agenda Scotland believes these changes are being made without due regard to the needs of the disabled people receiving the service or the service provider's contractual obligations, particularly to those employees directly providing the support.

These cuts are not being replicated in local authority services. 80% of voluntary sector providers have been unable to match wage increases awarded by councils to their own staff¹¹, including 'the living wage'. And unlike the private sector the voluntary sector must return any surplus made whilst bearing any losses in the contractual equivalent of 'heads we win, tails you lose'.

These cuts are coming at a time when disabled people and carers are increasingly looking to the voluntary sector for help, but also when the income from charitable donations has significantly decreased.

Scotland, and Scotland's disabled people, rely on a viable and sustainable voluntary sector. The current approach towards the sector threatens its very existence.

DAS
calls for:

A clear statement on the relationship between the state, voluntary sector and disabled people in terms of service provision for disabled people

A commitment to require rigorous impact assessments on service reductions which affect disabled people to be published by public services

⁹ Care Commission (2010) *Making the grade*

¹⁰ Care Commission (2011) *Quality of care review*

¹¹ Figure from Coalition of Care and Support Providers (CCPS)



Key facts about disabled people in Scotland

- 1 in 5 people are disabled
- 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem
- 758,000 people are deaf or hard of hearing (5-6,000 are first language BSL users)
- 36,000 people are registered blind or partially sighted
- 5,000 people have dual sensory impairments
- 120,000 people have a learning disability
- 5,000 people have multiple impairments



How many disabled people are in each constituency?

Parliamentary Constituency	Total electors	Number of disabled electors
Aberdeen Central	57,372	11,474
Aberdeen Donside	56,475	11,295
Aberdeen South and North Kincardine	54,602	10,920
Aberdeenshire East	57,850	11,570
Aberdeenshire West	54,025	10,805
Airdrie and Shotts	52,022	10,404
Almond Valley	60,135	12,027
Angus North and Mearns	52,582	10,516
Angus South	55,345	11,069
Argyll and Bute	49,285	9,857
Ayr	62,132	12,426
Banffshire and Buchan Coast	54,211	10,842
Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	55,663	11,132
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	59,981	11,996
Clackmannanshire and Dunblane	51,891	10,378
Clydebank and Milngavie	53,454	10,690
Clydesdale	57,269	11,454
Coatbridge and Chryston	51,862	10,372
Cowdenbeath	54,732	10,946
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	48,685	9,737
Cunningham North	57,070	11,414
Cunningham South	51,497	10,299
Dumbarton	53,876	10,775
Dumfriesshire	60,067	12,013
Dundee City East	54,318	10,863
Dundee City West	53,382	10,676
Dunfermline	55,791	11,158
East Kilbride	56,708	11,341
Eastwood	50,844	10,169
Edinburgh Central	53,228	10,646
Edinburgh Eastern	55,986	11,197
Edinburgh Northern and Leith	58,871	11,774
Edinburgh Pentlands	52,797	10,559



Edinburgh Southern	54,917	10,983
Edinburgh Western	56,418	11,284
Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire	54,729	10,946
Falkirk East	59,466	11,893
Falkirk West	58,858	11,772
Galloway and West Dumfries	57,015	11,403
Glasgow Anniesland	56,024	11,205
Glasgow Cathcart	58,886	11,777
Glasgow Kelvin	62,286	12,457
Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn	57,102	11,420
Glasgow Pollok	58,783	11,757
Glasgow Provan	55,688	11,138
Glasgow Shettleston	56,296	11,259
Glasgow Southside	52,452	10,490
Greenock and Inverclyde	57,253	11,451
Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse	56,517	11,303
Inverness and Nairn	62,483	12,497
Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley	63,786	12,757
Kirkcaldy	60,447	12,089
Linlithgow	65,159	13,032
Mid Fife and Glenrothes	54,087	54,817
Midlothian North and Musselburgh	58,467	11,693
Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale	58,157	11,631
Moray	56,673	11,335
Motherwell and Wishaw	54,352	10,870
Na h-Eileanan an Iar	21,988	4,398
North East Fife	59,193	11,839
Orkney Islands	16,533	3,307
Paisley	52,334	10,467
Perthshire North	53,835	10,767
Perthshire South and Kinross-shire	58,662	11,732
Renfrewshire North and West	49,382	9,876
Renfrewshire South	50,534	10,107
Rutherglen	56,876	11,375
Shetland Islands	17,594	3,519
Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	57,369	11,474
Stirling	54,921	10,984
Strathkelvin and Bearsden	59,818	11,964
Uddingston and Bellshill	56,267	11,253



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