

Manifesto for Inclusion 2010

Written by disabled people

► **UK Manifesto:**

The creation of a Scottish Parliament has meant that decision-making on many of the policies that affect disabled people's lives has been devolved. But the Westminster Parliament still retains the power to make decisions in several key areas including Equalities & Discrimination Law, Transport, Employment, Welfare Benefits and Fuel Poverty.

Inclusion Scotland is calling on all politicians to commit themselves to pursuing policies that will result in disabled people being empowered to fully participate in society. The following are demands which Inclusion Scotland believe need to be met to allow disabled people to play their part as full citizens.

► **Employment and Training:**

A thorough review of Access to Work to take place.

Access to Work is the main source of funding available to support disabled people who take up employment. It can pay for aids & adaptations to the workplace, transport to and from work and even personal assistants. The funding of the Access to Work programme has been increased but far too many disabled people and their employers remain unaware of it.

Disabled people do not believe that Access to Work's methods of assessing their needs are either fair or transparent - with many denied the help they believe they need.

Inclusion Scotland believes that Access to Work is not an aid but a barrier to disabled people's participation in employment and must be reformed.

All Access to Work & DWP staff to receive Disability Equality Training.

Inclusion Scotland believes that all staff dealing with disabled people should be better informed of disabled people's needs and rights and that such training should be carried out by disabled people themselves.

A coherent strategy to meet the needs of disabled job seekers and employees is adopted by Government.

Less than half of disabled people of working age are in work. Inclusion Scotland wishes to see a comprehensive strategy developed in co-production with disabled people that deals with all the barriers currently preventing disabled people from fully participating in Employment & Training.

Disabled people should not become worse off when they take up employment.

Far too many disabled people become worse off when they take up employment because of the withdrawal of benefits and the imposition of care charges. Legislation must be amended to ensure that work really does pay.

A Living Wage for all employees.

All employees should be able to expect to earn a Living Wage that takes them out of poverty.

► Welfare Reform:

A review of the Employment Support Allowance (ESA) regime.

Since its introduction only 5% of ESA claimants have scored enough points to be deemed unable to work while 36% have been placed on JSA, where they receive just £64.30 p.w.

Under the previous medical test, up to 83% of Incapacity Benefit claimants were found unfit for work.

There are already cases where people on the highest rate DLA care component (people so disabled that they need personal care or supervision day & night) are failing the Capability for Work test.

Amongst those who have failed the

new test are people diagnosed as at risk of committing suicide, people with Multiple Sclerosis and terminally ill cancer patients. Not only do they face a drop in their benefits but they are required to sign on and look for work - if they fail to do further benefit penalties are imposed.

Inclusion Scotland believes that the new test is unfair and results in - tens of thousands of genuinely disabled people losing their entitlement to disability benefits; being denied specialist support to find work and being inappropriately forced to look for work when they are seriously ill. A thorough review of this unfair regime is needed NOW!

Politicians to stop scape-goating disabled people as benefit cheats.

Politicians are using sick and disabled people as handy scapegoats for a growing benefits budget. This has to stop. Over 90% of disabled people of working age want to work. They want politicians to tackle the attitudinal and physical barriers that prevent them taking up employment, not indulging in blaming the victims for wider society's discrimination.

The benefits system should be about supporting disabled people into work and not about penalising those who are unable to.

Individual entitlement to Attendance Allowance (AA) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to be retained.

Proposals have been made for the future funding of care services in England that would result in older disabled people losing their individual entitlement to AA and DLA and the funds being handed over to local authorities.

These proposals would prevent older disabled people from receiving

benefits to spend on their own needs (for example to pay fuel bills), reducing their independence and impoverishing them.

Inclusion Scotland are calling on solutions to be found to funding care that would allow older disabled people to retain their individual entitlement to these essential benefits.

► Transport

A national network of low floor buses before 2020.

Our public transport network still largely excludes disabled people with mobility impairments. Current legislation means that buses and coaches won't need to be fully accessible before 2020. Who else in our society would be expected to wait 10 years for a bus?

Without accessible buses some disabled people are effectively excluded from taking up offers of employment or educational opportunities or from accessing shops and public services or even from visiting friends or family. Inclusion Scotland demands that legislation is introduced to bring forward the date by which all buses and long distance coaches must be fully accessible.

Introduction of Accessible Taxi Standards and Regulations.

In 2003, the Government stated that it intended to set standards for wheelchair accessible taxis and to introduce regulations that would apply to mainly urban local authority areas.

Some seven years later disabled people are still waiting for anything to happen. In the meantime taxis are still being licensed which are not accessible; disabled people are being charged more if they are wheelchair users and taxi drivers continue to ignore or refuse to carry disabled people with guide/hearing dogs & wheelchair users.

Inclusion Scotland calls on the incoming Government to act on previous promises and properly regulate the taxi industry to ensure that disabled people can use taxis in the same way as others do.

Inclusion Scotland was founded in 2001 as a result of calls from the Disabled People's Movement for a new, national, disability led, organisation. Inclusion Scotland is run by disabled people. We have the experience of disability and so are best placed to speak on issues of inclusion. The underpinning principles of our organisation are the Social Model of Disability and the Philosophy of Independent Living. In short, 'the belief that people are disabled by society's reaction to their impairments preventing their participation as equal citizens.'

Nothing About Us, Without Us

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