

# A Vision for an Inclusive Scotland

**On 18 September the Scottish people will make one of the most important decisions of our lifetimes. It will mean asking ourselves important questions like - “What sort of future do I want for Scotland?” and, “ How will my vote help make Scotland a better place to live in?”**

Despite being rich in natural resources, talent and cultural heritage, Scotland remains scarred by poverty, inequality, discrimination and exclusion. One of the groups worst affected is disabled people.

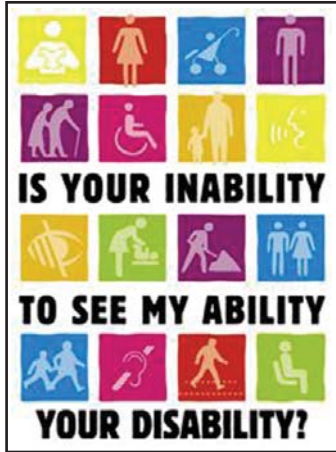
We are still largely excluded from many areas of Scottish economic, political and social life. At every stage of our lives we face barriers to inclusion. We are more likely than non-disabled people to be bullied at school and to be living in poverty. We are less likely to be in employment and to hold elected office. Too often we have no voice and no choice. This situation cannot be allowed to continue.

To shape policies so they change our lives for the better means working in co-production with disabled people. Only we know what we want, need and aspire to. Only we have the lived experience of what works to remove the barriers we face - and what doesn't.

Whatever the outcome of the Referendum, now is the time to think carefully about the Scotland we want.

With that in mind, Inclusion Scotland took action to find out what our members think. They made many suggestions that could help transform Scottish society and make it more inclusive. This document sets out what they told us and provides some background facts and figures.

Our vision for an inclusive Scotland is of a country where everyone has equal opportunity to contribute whatever they can, thereby enriching all aspects of society. In an inclusive Scotland, diversity is celebrated and equality actively promoted. Barriers to participation are removed. Disabled people get the support they need to lead their lives to the full, as they choose, just like anyone else.



## A Strategy for Inclusion

To make this vision a reality requires a Strategy for Inclusion. The strategy should be drawn up by Scottish Government in co-production with disabled people and their organisations. It will then take strong leadership from all involved to implement that strategy, transform Scottish society and, with it, disabled people's lives. The Strategy needs to have clear outcomes, ways to measure progress and accountability. Every year a report on the implementation, and progress, of the Strategy should be laid

before the Scottish Parliament.

To achieve inclusion, action will be needed across a range of areas. Barriers in any one can prevent success in some - even all - of the others. For example it's no good having accessible transport if the destination you arrive at is inaccessible.

This makes effective co-ordination between policy areas essential, regardless of the outcome of the Referendum. It might be achieved by:

- **Greater co-ordination between the policies of the UK and Scottish Governments.**
- **Devolving more powers to the Scottish Parliament.**
- **Greater co-ordination of policies across Scottish Government.**
- **Co-operation between national and local government.**

What matters most is that the real experts, disabled people, are heard and our views acted upon.

## Starting points and Outcomes

These are the areas that disabled people believe need addressing to achieve an inclusive Scotland.

### Inclusion in Political Life

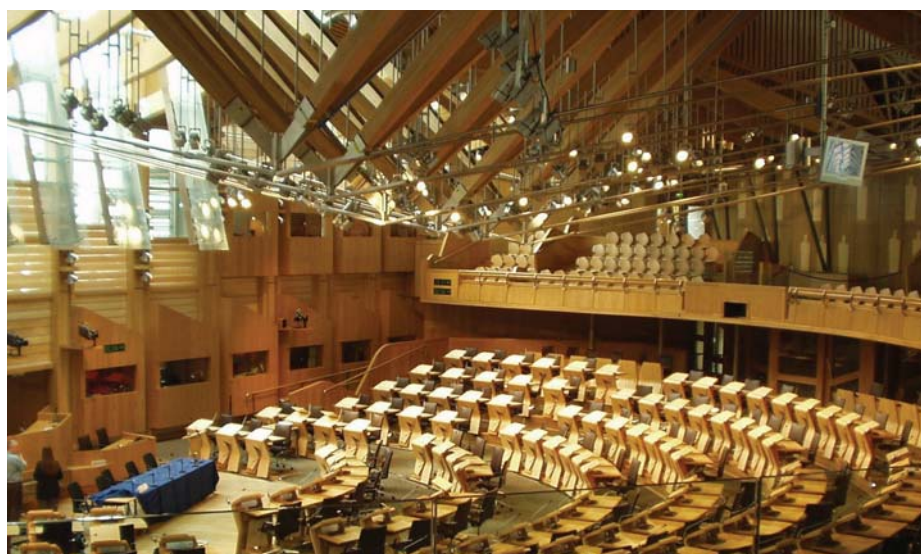
- **Only 2 out of 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament are known to**

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**self-identify as disabled even though disabled people make up one in five of the Scottish population.**

Disabled people face massive physical, informational and attitudinal barriers to participation in Scottish political life. As a consequence, we are under-represented as Local Authority Councillors, on Health Boards and in the Scottish Parliament.

In England an 'Access to Elected Office for Disabled People Fund' currently exists to assist disabled people planning to stand for election to the Westminster Parliament or English Local Authorities. It doesn't apply to the Scottish Parliament or Scottish Local Authorities.



A Fund is needed here to provide more general practical support to disabled people wishing to be involved in Scottish politics. The Fund and its administration would be developed in co-production with disabled people and our organisations.

Inclusion Scotland is currently involved in delivering a small pilot project to provide internships in the Scottish Parliament for disabled graduates. This scheme also needs to be expanded and funded on a long-term basis.

## **Public attitudes**

- **Fifty percent of disabled people responding to surveys by disability charity Scope reported an increase in hostile attitudes towards them in the last year (2011-2012)(i).**
- **The British Social Attitudes Survey shows that support for spending on benefits for disabled people unable to work fell from 63% to 53% between 2008 and 2011.**

Disabled people's confidence in participating in wider society can be eroded by daily experience of verbal and sometimes even physical abuse. Negative attitudes are often

fostered by media coverage whipping up support for benefit cuts by branding us fraudsters and scroungers.

As a matter of urgency, negative attitudes towards disabled people must be challenged by Scottish Government. Previous campaigns such as for “See Me”(ii) and “Zero Tolerance” (iii) have successfully challenged public attitudes.

Stonewall and LGBT Youth Scotland organisations have worked with schools to change attitudes around sexuality. Investment is similarly needed in a programme to change children's attitudes towards disabled people.

An ongoing programme of campaigning and education could succeed over time in achieving a positive change in non-disabled people's attitudes and, in turn, disabled people's lives.

## Education

- **In 2000 the special school population represented 1.11% of the total school population (primary & secondary). By 2010, after a decade, of 'mainstreaming' it stood at 1%.**
- **Disabled school leavers with additional support needs have lower educational attainment than pupils without such needs, even when the support needed is unrelated to a learning difficulty.**
- **Disabled children are at twice the risk of being subjected to long term bullying at school.**

Educating disabled children in 'mainstream' schools has supposedly been the default position for the last decade. Yet there has been little change to the numbers of disabled children being educated in “special schools”.



Even with dedicated staff, the academic attainment record of special schools is poor. Separating disabled children from their non-disabled peers also does nothing to prepare disabled children for later life in a predominantly non-disabled world.

Disabled people would like to see greater effort made to integrate disabled children into mainstream schools where both disabled and

non-disabled children benefit from learning to live with one another.

Deaf people would like to see British Sign Language (BSL) properly recognised as a language and as a subject in the curriculum for schools. This would do much to increase BSL users' ability to communicate with other people in Scottish society, and improve the employability of deaf people when moving from education to work or training.

## **Employment:**

- **Only 44% of disabled people of working age are in work compared to 80% of non-disabled people.**
- **By age 19 young disabled people are three times as likely not to be in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) as their non-disabled peers.**
- **In 2012/13 just 63 out of 25,691 (0.2%) Modern Apprenticeships went to young disabled people.**

Disabled people's ongoing exclusion from the labour market must be tackled. Disabled people have the right to work, if we are able to, and should have appropriate support to secure and maintain employment.

Scottish Government could lead by example by establishing internships and apprenticeships specifically for young disabled people in every Government Directorate. Every Health Board and Local Authority in Scotland could do likewise.

At present most young disabled people never make the transition from school to employment. Better support at this time is clearly needed.

Someone who has not worked by the age of 30 is not an attractive prospective employee. By providing young disabled people with genuine work experience in public service the Scottish Government would make them much more employable in other sectors.

In addition, future public sector procurement contracts could include social benefit clauses aimed to increase the employment of disabled people. For example they could place a requirement on those who win the contract to provide apprenticeships to young disabled people.

Disabled people also want to see:

- **Employment Programmes set up to replace the discredited and ineffectual Work Programme.** The new programmes could genuinely address the barriers that individual disabled people face in securing employment - providing tailored support to enable us to obtain jobs with career structures and decent pay.

People with learning difficulties are finding it harder and harder to get 'real' jobs that give them the experience to progress to jobs with better pay. Addressing this issue should be a priority for any new Employment Programme.

- **An expansion of the Access to Work Scheme.** The DWP's Access to Work scheme can help pay for practical support and adaptations if someone has an impairment or health condition. It can support disabled people to start work or stay in work. Yet take-up in Scotland is low and it only supports a tiny proportion of working age disabled people (just over 2%) to access and maintain employment.

For every pound spent on Access to Work the Treasury receives £1.60 in tax revenue. Investment in opening out the Access to Work programme could thus be self-financing over time and would also increase the number of accessible workplaces.

Scottish Government could promote the Access to Work scheme to employers and disabled people. This would encourage take-up, reduce physical and attitudinal barriers to employment and re-assure small employers that assistance is available to employ disabled workers.



In addition we call on the government to:

- **Expand scheme to support employability schemes** e.g. volunteering and work shadowing.
- **Allow people to apply in advance of gaining work to have a provisional claim ready.**
- **The elimination of Benefit traps.** Disabled people who are working therapeutically can face a loss of some of their benefits if they increase their hours.

Similarly if we take up volunteering or apply to serve on public bodies our entitlement to disability benefits can be threatened.

Volunteering is a known route to acquiring valuable skills and work experience. Removing these traps would assist disabled people in improving their employability.

## **Social Care**

- **Over the last 4 years Social Care charges levied by Scottish Local Authorities have risen by an average of 20%.**
- **Charges for Social Care vary between no charge for home care services in Fife to £23.70 an hour in Angus.**
- **The amount levied can vary between 15% of disposable income and 100%.**
- **The combination of cuts to benefits and care services means that, in England, people with the most severe impairments will lose an average of £8,832 per person - 19 times the impact on the average citizen. No estimate currently exists for the combined impact in Scotland.**

Scotland is in the process of integrating Health and Social Care services. In theory this could result in more individually tailored, wrap-around services for disabled people.

However disabled people need to be involved in the planning and commissioning of the new services. Otherwise Social Care will continue to be something done to disabled people rather than with them.

Social Care provides the essential support that can enable disabled people to participate in family, community and economic life. In other words it is key to achieving independent living.

**Independent living** means all disabled people having the same **freedom, choice, dignity** and **control** as other citizens at home, at work and in the community. It does not necessarily mean living by yourself or fending for yourself. It means rights to practical assistance and support to participate in society and live an ordinary life.

Self-Directed Support (where disabled people have choice over who provides their



support, one option being a direct payment with which they can purchase the services they need) was supposed to increase disabled people's choice, dignity and control but cuts in care budgets have severely undermined its early promise.

Local Authority Social Care budgets have suffered because of the UK Government's austerity cuts. As a consequence disabled people's access to essential Social Care is being restricted by:

- **Raising of eligibility criteria.**
- **Restrictions in the activities social care supports down to matters of basic survival (life and limb cover).**
- **Care assessments governed more by budgetary considerations than disabled people's needs.**
- **Care charges rising far faster than the rate of inflation.**

Rationing of care services is depriving disabled people of the assistance they need to live full and fulfilling lives. It can mean disabled people effectively being prisoners in their own homes - dressed, washed, fed and toileted but unable to go out to meet friends or family to take part in social activities.

There are strong arguments for investing in Social Care-

- **To improve disabled people's health by reducing their social isolation, in turn reducing healthcare spending over the longer term.**
- **To support disabled people to engage in training, education, volunteering and civic engagement, increasing their employability and participation in other forms of social contribution.**

Disabled people believe that charging for Social Care is akin to charging for Health services. Both are essential.



However disabled people recognise that future funding of Social Care must be affordable and sustainable. We suggest that an independent Social Care Funding Commission is established which includes representatives from disabled people's organisations.

The Commission would look across different budgets and funding streams and make recommendations on long term solutions to the funding of Social Care.

A further difficulty concerns the portability of care packages. At present disabled people who receive Social Care services and need to move home from one Local Authority to another for family/care/work reasons cannot readily do so.



It means being reassessed and risking the loss of support. Many consequently avoid moving. Those who have no choice but to move can find the value of their care package reduced by thousands, sometimes even tens of thousands, of pounds. This effectively denies disabled people the right to “Freedom of Movement”, supposedly guaranteed to all European citizens.

Needs accepted as essential, and met, in one Local Authority are treated as aspirational and left unmet by others. Disabled people believe this is profoundly unfair. We believe new regulations are needed to ensure it is possible to move a support package between Local Authorities without losing essential support.

## **Welfare**

- **Over 50% of the £22 billion in cuts to Welfare Benefits are falling on disabled people and their families.**
- **Because of discrimination in employment and reliance on benefits disabled people are twice as likely as non-disabled people to experience “material deprivation”.**
- **Eighty percent of the 95,000 Scots households affected by the Bedroom Tax contain a disabled person.**

There is clear evidence that disabled people have very unfairly been singled out for a



disproportionate amount of the cuts to benefits.

The cumulative impact of the benefit cuts on disabled people's incomes is truly staggering with an estimated total loss of over £1 billion a year by 2015. These cuts will drive tens of thousands of disabled people into poverty and deepen the poverty that far too many disabled people already experience.

At present benefits policy is reserved to Westminster but benefits interact with many other policy areas, including those devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

For example, benefit policy can have an impact on supporting people into employment, volunteering, housing, education and transport (e.g. concessionary travel). Welfare policy must be well coordinated with other policies, to avoid creating barriers and traps and increasing disabled people's exclusion.

The over-riding principle of any reformed benefits system should be that it supports all of Scotland's population, including disabled people, to reach their full potential and play a full, active and equal role in Scottish community and economy.

Providing welfare on the cheap has knock-on costs in terms of the health and well-being of citizens. These in turn are passed on to the tax-payer. Investment in effective welfare provision to help reduce inequality will lead to better outcomes, not just for individuals but for society as a whole.

The current system is geared to one outcome - placement in the labour market. By adopting an integrated approach, making links between welfare, health & well-being, Social Care and housing, a future Scottish welfare system could aim to recognise and support the social value of a range of other roles including voluntary and care work.

Benefits should support all citizens by providing an adequate income and assisting disabled people to achieve and maintain independent living. A welfare system worthy of the name should be underpinned by a commitment to fundamental human rights. All of those using it should be treated with dignity and respect.

Instead, disabled people have been made the victims of an inhumane, expensive, never-ending and error-ridden assessment regime. Hundreds of thousands have had to

resort to lengthy, stressful appeals and reviews to get the support they are entitled to and very much need. Over 40% of appeals are upheld and this rises to over 70% when the disabled person is represented by an advice worker.

We believe that the current Work Capability and Personal Independence Payment assessments must be scrapped. Instead disabled people and their organisations should co-produce new guidelines for disability benefit assessments. This new approach requires a root and branch review of disability and carers' benefits to remove current work, education, caring and volunteering disincentives.

## **Accessible communications**

There is a need for all Public and Third Sector organisations to review the way they communicate with disabled people. The same applies to Political Parties, who need to review the accessibility of election materials.

Despite guidance, a great deal is still sent out in inaccessible formats. With the integration of Health and Social Care services there is also a need for more BSL interpreters and an investment in advocacy resources to ensure that disabled people can effectively communicate their wishes and provide informed consent for treatment.

## **Healthcare**

- **The life expectancy of a learning disabled person is 20 years less than that of the general population.**
- **Mental health service users are more likely to die of heart disease and cancer than the general population<sup>(iv)</sup>.**

Different impairment groups experience massive health inequalities that are not directly or obviously attributable to their impairment. Health improvement programmes are needed to reduce such inequalities.

Targets should be set to reduce early deaths and other health inequalities amongst disabled people that are unrelated to their underlying impairments.

## **Housing and the Built Environment:**

- **There are 836,000 households in Scotland where there is someone with a long**
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**term condition (LTC) or disability(v).**

- **There are 129,000 homes that are in need of adaptation to meet the needs of people with a long term condition or disability who live in them. This is 5% of the total housing stock(vi).**
- **There is an estimated shortfall of 17,042 barrier-free houses, affecting 14% of wheelchair users(vii).**

There are not enough accessible homes for disabled people to live in. If you cannot get in or out of your house or find it difficult to wash or sleep because of barriers in your own home then participating in wider society becomes nearly impossible. It also increases your need for Social Care.

Even if a disabled person's own home is accessible they often cannot visit friends or relatives because their homes are not.

Due to poverty a large proportion of disabled people live in the social rented sector. Therefore more social housing is needed which is accessible or easily adapted to the needs of those who acquire an impairment - and that's most of us as we grow older! Disabled people believe that even to begin to address the unmet need for accessible homes at least 10% of new developments of 20 homes or more should be built to wheelchair-accessible standard.

To ensure that existing stock is better used local and national registers of accessible housing are needed. This should mean that the limited stock of accessible homes is let quickly and efficiently to disabled people.



Disabled people believe that “Access” should be a compulsory module on all Scottish architecture courses. Architects need to understand fully how barriers in the built environment can arise and how to identify and remove them. In addition local access panels should be “statutory consultees” for planning applications.

If all new homes were “Homes for Life” that catered for disabled and older people, and all new developments were checked for access before they were built, then many of the physical barriers to disabled people's participation would be removed. Getting it right from the outset also means saving money later on if adaptations have to be made.

At the moment some types of adaptations on impairment related grounds are exempt from Value Added Tax and some are not. For example work on bathrooms is largely VAT exempt whilst work on kitchens is not.

This is scandalous given that these same adaptations often remove or reduce disabled people's need for expensive Social Care services. Disabled people believe that VAT should no longer be charged on major domestic adaptations that are necessary for Access reasons.

## **Transport**

Accessible transport is essential for opening up Scottish society to disabled people. Yet 20 years after the passage of the Disability Discrimination Act many bus and train services are still not fully accessible, particularly in rural areas. Scotland must ensure that all future provision is fully accessible, not only to physically impaired people but to all disabled people.

At a time when massive cuts are taking place to disabled people's benefits we are now also charged for the issue of Blue Badges. Disabled people want to see charges for Blue Badges removed for all disabled people living in poverty.

At present some bus/taxi companies train their drivers in communication and accessibility issues. Others do not. Disabled people believe that such training should be mandatory.

Making a train journey in Scotland requires 24 hours' notice to the rail company to arrange assistance. London Transport has abandoned this requirement.

Why can this not be done here too?



Large numbers of disabled people do not benefit from concessionary transport as services are not fully accessible. For example only 2 bus services in Scotland - Lothian Buses and Aberdeen First - have fully wheelchair-accessible fleets.

Therefore the concessionary scheme should be extended to community transport services which are more responsive to disabled people's individual needs.

## **Conclusion**

Inclusion Scotland believes these changes would make Scotland a more inclusive, richer society. Richer because at present disabled people's exclusion prevents us from making contributions in so many areas of Scottish life - arts, science, leisure, politics etc. Everyone is made poorer by disabled people's continuing exclusion.

There is a long way to go to achieve the vision for an inclusive Scotland but whatever our views on Constitutional Reform, whatever the outcome on 18 September, surely we can agree that all Scots need to be included in forging Scotland's future?

i Scope Disability Surveys 2011 & 2012,  
<http://www.comres.co.uk/poll/712/scope-disability-survey.htm>

ii A summary of the evaluation of the operation of “See Me” the national campaign against stigma and discrimination, 2009

iii Evaluation of the Zero Tolerance Respect Project, Scottish Government, 2002 and “An Evaluation of the Scottish Office Domestic Violence Media Campaign - Research Findings”, 1998

iv Inequalities in healthcare provision for people with severe mental illness, D. Lawrence & S. Kisely, Journal of Psychopharmacology, 2010

v The Scottish Household Conditions Survey (SHCS).

vi SHCS

vii Mind The Step: An estimation of housing need among wheelchair users in Scotland” by Horizon Housing Association and the Chartered Institute of Housing.

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**Inclusion Scotland is a national network of disabled people's organisations and individual disabled people. Together we represent many thousands of disabled people.**

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## Notes