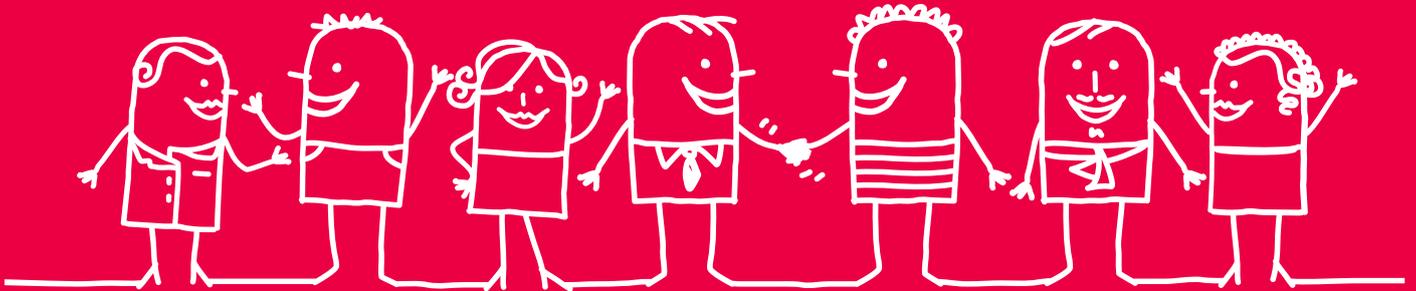


CLP Accessibility Guide

Making your CLP open, accessible,
and inclusive to disabled members



Contents

Foreword

Kate Green MP, Shadow Minister
for Disabled People

What is accessibility?

Equality Act 2010

Disability Labour

Physical Access

Information and communication

Attitude and culture

Making campaigning accessible

CLP Disability Coordinator role

Useful Information

Kate Green MP, Shadow Minister for Disabled People

I am delighted to introduce this new accessibility guide for CLPs.

The Labour Party has a strong track record in disability rights. In government, we worked to extend rights for disabled people, and remove the barriers they face in all aspects of life, from employment to public services.

Under David Cameron, rights for disabled people are under threat. The cost-of-living crisis is being felt acutely by disabled people, who have seen their support slashed and their costs rise. The unfair bedroom tax is hitting disabled people hardest, and hate crime against disabled people is on the increase.

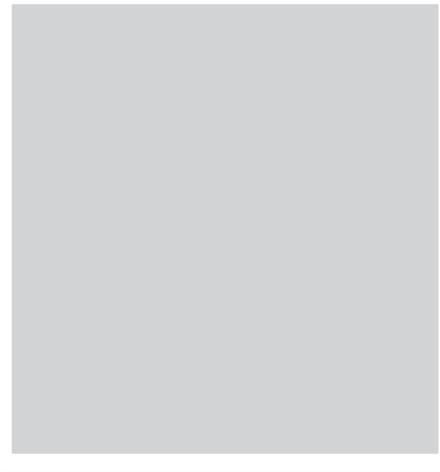
Labour will tackle this head on. We will abolish the bedroom tax, take tougher action on hate crime, and ensure disabled people are able to fully participate in society.

We are determined to change the rhetoric around disability, celebrating the contribution disabled people make to society, not demeaning them.

We want every single one of our members to play a part as we campaign to get Labour back into Government next year. And we can only do this if our local parties are equipped with the information they need to be open and accessible to all members.

This new guide will support local parties in making those adjustments, so that all of our members can play a full part in the Labour Party- from accessible campaigning, to social events.

Thank you for being part of this.



What is accessibility?

The Labour party is committed to fairness and equality, within society, our local communities, and within the party itself.

Our local parties are most effective when all members are able to play an active part in the running and organisation of CLPs. Disabled members play crucial roles in their local parties up and down the country, supported by their CLPs.

As well as making adjustments to ensure full physical access and clear communications, many local parties are undertaking work to ensure they promote an involving and inclusive atmosphere that is welcoming to newer members.

The guidance in this booklet will support you and your local party to make the often small adjustments that can make a huge difference, ensuring that all of your local members are able to participate and that Labour is able to reach out to disabled people across the UK, listening to their views and standing up for our values of social justice and equality.

Reasonable adjustments

The duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that, as far as is reasonable, a disabled person has the same access to everything as a non-disabled person.

When the duty arises, you are under a positive and proactive duty to take steps to remove or reduce or prevent the obstacles a disabled person faces.

Here are two examples of reasonable adjustments:

- A member who uses a wheelchair joins the CLP, so monthly meetings are moved from a room at the top of some stairs with no lift, to a ground floor room with doors wide enough for wheelchair access.
- A partially sighted member requested materials in large print. The CLP secretary therefore ensures that meetings of minutes are also produced in large print.

Equality Act 2010- your responsibilities

The Labour Party is governed by the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 is concerned with discrimination and harassment in respect of the following protected characteristics.

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Local Labour parties are required to comply with the Equality Act. This guide sets out some practical measures you can take to ensure your CLP is compliant.

For more information visit:
gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance

Disability Labour

Disability Labour is an affiliate of the Labour Party. It exists to represent and support the interests of disabled Labour Party members and supporters.

The aims of the group are to:

- Participate and contribute to the Labour Party through affiliation
- Identify and break down the disabling barriers within society
- Build links between the Labour Party and the disabled people's movement
- Work with the Labour Party to ensure that all its services and meetings are as accessible as possible
- Become a centre of excellence on disability and equality issues

**You can find out more about the group
and join online by visiting:**
labour.org.uk/disabled-members.

Physical Access

When holding any kind of event- from a CLP meeting, a public meeting, a councillor surgery, or a social, you should consider how disabled people can enter and exit the premises you are using.

The access points of any venue should be checked as standard, not after a disabled member has indicated they want to attend an activity. By then, it may be too late to make changes for that event and someone may be excluded from the meeting, which is both personally distressing and also not in line with our values of inclusivity and access for all.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced a detailed guide for small organisations on 'Making Goods and Services Easier for Disabled Customers: A Practical Guide for Small Businesses and other service providers' which can be found on their website equalityhumanrights.com.

When checking the accessibility of a venue you should check both its location and the premises itself. This is called an 'Access Audit', which simply means taking the time to assess a venue for its access.

Below is a list of questions that will help you assess a building and its suitability for your event. The list is not exhaustive, and detailed advice can be found by visiting equalityhumanrights.com.

Location

- Is there a drop off point outside the premises for disabled people who use taxis or accessible transport schemes?
- Are the pavements and kerbs in the local area wide, even and with dropped kerbs?
- Are the premises near to accessible public transport?
- Are the pavements free of obstructions or are the obstructions at least obvious due to the contrasting colours?
- Are any nearby pedestrian crossings easy to use, with audible warnings and tactile edges to the pavement?
- Is the street lighting in the nearby area bright enough for safety and security?
- If you find that your local area has problems which may be preventing disabled access, you should contact your local authority, who are obliged to ensure the local area is compliant under the Equalities Act 2010

Parking

- Is there space for blue badge holders to park near the premises or the entrance of the building you are using?
- Is the location of parking clearly marked? A wheelchair user will not want to get out of their car to ask where to park.
- Have you provided a map to members ahead of meetings, especially visitors and new members?

Access into and within the building

- Is there a well-lit and clear sign outside of the building indicating the entrance?
- Is there good lighting at the entrance?
- Are there steps up to the door? If so, do not think that a wheelchair user or disabled person who cannot use steps can be carried up. This is undignified and unsafe, and is not acceptable to disabled people.
- If there are steps, are the building owners able to clearly signpost to an accessible building entrance?
- Is there a ramp available, with a gradient no steeper than 1 in 12, which is the legally required height?
- Do any steps have marked edges in yellow or white, to help those with visual impairments?
- Is there a handrail to help walkers with mobility difficulties on each side of the steps?
- Are the doors both at the entrance and inside the building wide enough to enable a wheelchair user or someone using walking aids through the door?
- Is there a receptionist or bell to ring if assistance is needed?
- Are the doors heavy and difficult to open?
- Are there glass doors or large areas of glass that needs markings on it to increase its visibility to those with visual impairments?
- Are the arrangements and facilitates for evacuating people in an emergency suitable to ensure that everyone can leave the building independently?
- Is there step free access to the room you intend to use?
- Are you able to book a room within easy distance of the entrance?

Signposting

- Are the signs to your meeting place in large, clear signage?
- Are all relevant locations signposted- refreshments, meeting room, toilets, main entrance, and emergency exits?

Lifts

- Are the doors automatic or manual, heavy or light?
- What are the dimensions of the lift? Is it big enough for a wheelchair user to be able to get in, and turn their chair inside?
- Are the controls at a height that wheelchair users can reach?
- Is there Braille on the controls, and is there any audio information on the opening and closing of the doors and floor number?
- Are there numerous mirrors, which could be disorientating to those with visual impairments?

Toilets

It's important that everyone has access to a toilet at any meeting or social you have organised. A lot of premises do not have fully accessible toilets with room for a wheelchair, but you should make maximum effort to use a venue that does.

- Is there a toilet on the same level as the meeting room?
- Is this an accessible toilet i.e. one which a wheelchair user could use?

Building owners are legally required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure access to toilet facilities, however this can sometimes result in ambiguity. Here are a few questions you can use to make an initial assessment.

- Is it also used as a storage cupboard or baby changing room, which means there are lots of things in there which would restrict the space and be a health and safety hazard to those who would use it?
- Is it big enough for a wheelchair user to move around in?
- Is the door wide enough?
- Is there access to both sides of the seat or just one? It's much better to have access from both sides but if it is just one side it should be clear of items- bins, etc.

- Are there a good set of grab rails round the toilet and are the positions of the grab rails retractable so that they can be moved out of the way if necessary?
- Is there an alarm cord (that should be in red) near the toilet or a push button alarm (also in red) and does it reach the floor?
- Is the hand basin low enough and within reach of the toilet, with facilities near to dry hands?
- Are the other facilities at an appropriate height- mirror, soap, towels, light switches, alarm?
- Are the taps easy to use, not requiring a strong grip to turn?
- Does the door lock work and is it easy to operate?
- Are there horizontal bars on the inside and outside of the door to assist those in wheelchairs to open and close the door?

Do not panic if the toilet does not have all these facilities but you should immediately speak to the premises management and enquire if the toilet can be brought up to standard. Sometimes only small improvements are required, like clearing out any clutter or improving the guide rails.

Tables, desks and seating

We all want to be comfortable at meetings, social activities, and advice sessions, but the right furniture is particularly important for disabled members. Consider the following questions when assessing your venue.

- Are the seats hard or soft, fixed or not? A mixture of seating is best, although fixed seating can make it really difficult to arrange the room to suit all needs.
- Are there some chairs with arms, which may be easier to use for some disabled people?
- Is there space for a wheelchair to get in and out of the room comfortably?
- Will those in a wheelchair be seated inclusively, not placed at the back of the room away from other attendees?
- Does the height of the tables allow for those using a wheelchair to get their feet underneath?
- Would there be any furniture which a disabled person could lie down on if they needed to, or would there be space for them to bring their own bench?

Floor Covering

- Is the floor covering uneven or thick carpet, which could make it difficult for a wheelchair user?
- Is it slippery or does the colour make the floor merge into the walls or doors?
- A non-slip carpet contrasting with the wall cover will help those with mobility and visual impairments. Thick carpet can make it heavy going for wheelchair users. Surfaces which are worn or slippery are a real hazard for disabled and older members.

Audio Aids

An induction loop is an audio aid to support people who use a hearing aid. If there is not a built in one within the building you are using, you could consider informing the owners of the venue of their obligations under the Equality Act. You could also consider purchasing a portable loop, or getting together with other local parties to buy one. They start from around £100 and could make a real difference to someone's experience of your meeting.

- Does the room have a built in induction loop? If this, this should be used on every occasion the rooms are used for meetings.
- Have you considered purchasing a portable induction loop?

Lighting

Good lighting is essential for the participation of anyone in an event. Ideally lighting levels should be good with a minimum amount of pools of poor lighting or shadows.

This will not only benefit people with a visual impairment but those with mobility impairments who are concerned about obstructions/ uneven floor surfaces or people who communicate via lip reading which benefits from good lighting levels.

- Are the lighting levels good?
- Is it possible to improve the lighting with some additional portable lighting?

Smoking

- Ensure you have a 'no smoking' policy at meetings. Smoke affects many disabled people and the health of all members.

Guide Dogs

- Is there full access to all areas of the building for all assistance dogs?
- Does that building have signage which makes it clear they accept working dogs?

Equipment

The following pieces of equipment are the most frequently requested items. Consider how you could fund these items, should a member request it. There are numerous local and national organisations that they can be purchased from.

- Portable ramp
- Hand rail
- Stair lift
- Minicom
- Induction loop

Information and Communication

Information and communications are only useful if the people you are communicating with can access the information.

You should consider both the information you give to the public when giving out information like newsletters, websites, election addresses, and also the information for party members, including notices of meetings, minutes, and communication in the meetings themselves.

When giving information to party members and the public, try to ensure that your materials and presentation are accessible to everyone, including people with visual or hearing impairments or learning disabilities.

First and foremost you should include a section on communication when doing your members audit to identify any immediate adjustments that should be made.

There are many simple adjustments you can make, such as producing documents in a larger, clear print, and using clear language that is jargon-free. Some members may have more specific adjustments that you should make to help them fully participate.

When communicating with the public you should offer to provide documents in an alternative format. When collecting information about adjustments, keep a record of this so that you can supply information in the same format for future communications.

Guidance for clear and accessible communication can be found below. You can also get further guidance from Action on Hearing Loss, The Royal National Institute of Blind People, and People First by visiting their websites.

Formatting and Style

- When providing written materials, use a large sans serif font. This is easy to do on any computer.
- Print materials should be clear. Black print on a light background is the easiest to read.
- Keep use of caps lock and italics to a minimum.
- Some members may require alternative formats, so ensure you are aware of how you can convert or produce alternative information. These include large print, audio-tape, sign language video and Easyread for people with learning disabilities

- If people have indicated that they need large print copies, discuss this with them to find out their preference and size of font.
- The acceptable basic print within the disability movement is 14 point. They may want 16 or 18 point, or larger.
- For other people electronic information is easier to access, so ensure you email up to date information to members.
- Write using clear language without long and unnecessary words.
- Keep abbreviations to a minimum. If you need to use them, ensure that abbreviations are placed in a directory at the back, and indicate this.
- Use smaller paragraphs with bold headings which are easier to read and understand.
- Use diagrams and pictures to explain ideas, which not only make materials more accessible, particularly to those with learning disabilities, but also make materials more interesting.
- Offer to read materials aloud if requested.
- Consider getting a minicom (a text phone) for a constituency or branch office or for MPs surgeries so that you can talk directly to people who are deaf.
- 'Easyread' for people with learning disabilities is a format made up of a combination of pictures and words known as pictorials that enable the reader to understand the words. The pictorial is usually placed on the right of a sentence/paragraph to identify what has been written. This form of transcription is supplied by 'People First', the National Self-Advocacy Group for People with Learning Difficulties', and more information can be found on the gov.uk Equality Act pages.

Communication At Meetings

To ensure that you meet your members' needs, it is recommended that you ask or assist them to fill in a form stating their requirements, which you can keep for future reference. The information on this form will ensure that you are always aware what your members' needs are and can be used for future events.

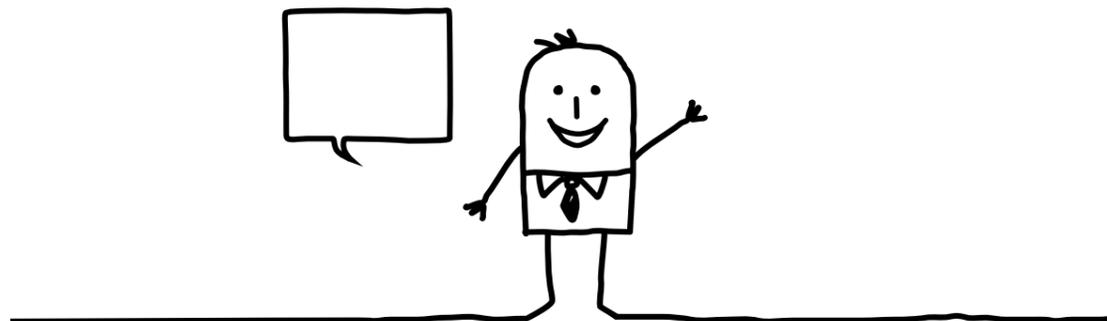
Clear Communication and Participation

- If you are using a presentation using slides or PowerPoint, use the text and font guidance in this booklet to ensure that people with a visual impairment or who cannot see the screen, are not excluded.
- If possible, automatically provide large print copies of your slides- for people with some sight, this can make following your presentation easier.

- If a deaf member is attending a meeting and they use British Sign Language Palantype (which turns voice into text appearing on a screen) or they lip read, ask in advance what facilities they will need to accommodate their needs.
- Once you have found out your members' access needs, you might find that a Sign Language Interpreter could be needed. You will need to consider this carefully as there are cost implications, and you may need to book interpreters in advance. You may find that reading out the minutes, report and other information is acceptable, but the best thing to do is discuss with the member who has requested the support, as they may have ideas and alternative suggestions.
- Remember that whoever is organising the meeting will need to be aware beforehand of your members needs and make the appropriate arrangements. Those attending the meeting should also be aware of any improvements they can make to the way they communicate.
- During meetings, the chair should ensure that only one person speaks at a time, to aid understanding and interpretation.
- Some people may want someone to explain to them what is happening in the meeting, and others may ask that someone takes notes.

Further Advice

- Contact your Regional office, Disability Labour, or a local organisation of disabled people for further information and advice on improving access.
- If you know that disabled people are visiting, send them the requirements form in advance, and make the changes that you can to ensure that their visit goes well.
- Be honest about your facilities. Ask for advice on how to meet someone's access needs if you are not sure.
- Read the guidance provided by national disability organisations- find their contact details are the back of this booklet.



Attitude and Culture

Ensuring that you have an accessible and welcoming culture within your local party is important, not just for people with disabilities but for all.

We all need to consider our attitudes and ensure that we are taking a positive attitude towards disabled people both in our party and in the local community.

Here are some tips for ensuring your CLP is one that welcomes all members:

- Vary the times of meetings to accommodate members with caring responsibilities, shift work, and other commitments.
- Welcome new members to the CLP with a phone call or personal email inviting them to your next event, and follow up with them afterwards.
- In meetings, encourage new members to put their ideas forward and come along to social events.
- Remember that not all disabilities are visible- people must be allowed to self-identify.
- Vary the type of event you hold- the more types of events, the more people you will involve in the activity of your local party.
- Consider if there is a way members can give anonymous feedback- such as an annual survey to members
- Above all-listen to the feedback of your members and take on feedback, continuously making changes to make your CLP the best it can be.



Making Campaigning Accessible

Due to its nature, campaigning can be a difficult area in which to make the reasonable adjustments necessary for some disabled members to fully participate. The best thing to do to ensure you are inclusive is to include a question on your access needs survey going to members, to find out what types of campaigning they are able to take part in.

There are lots of forms of campaigning that may be more accessible for some members than door knocking. These include:

Phonebanking

Members with decreased mobility may prefer to do phone canvassing instead. When organising a campaign day, speak to your local organiser or regional office and see if there are some desks or office space available where people can do phone canvassing, whilst another team does door knocking.

Office admin

During all campaigns, but particularly in a busy office close to election, there are lots of crucial admin tasks to be done, which may be easier for some of your members to take part in. This includes data inputting, keeping the office tidy and organised, putting together bags and sheets for doorknockers, welcoming volunteers, getting lunch ready. Speak to any members who have indicated on their access needs form that they would like to help with office based tasks, and find out tasks they are best suited for.

Online Campaigning

Online campaigning, through email and social media, is a valuable way of reaching out to voters. Some members might be able to help with social media, uploading photos and posting the latest campaign news on facebook and twitter, and emailing supporter lists.

Volunteer coordination

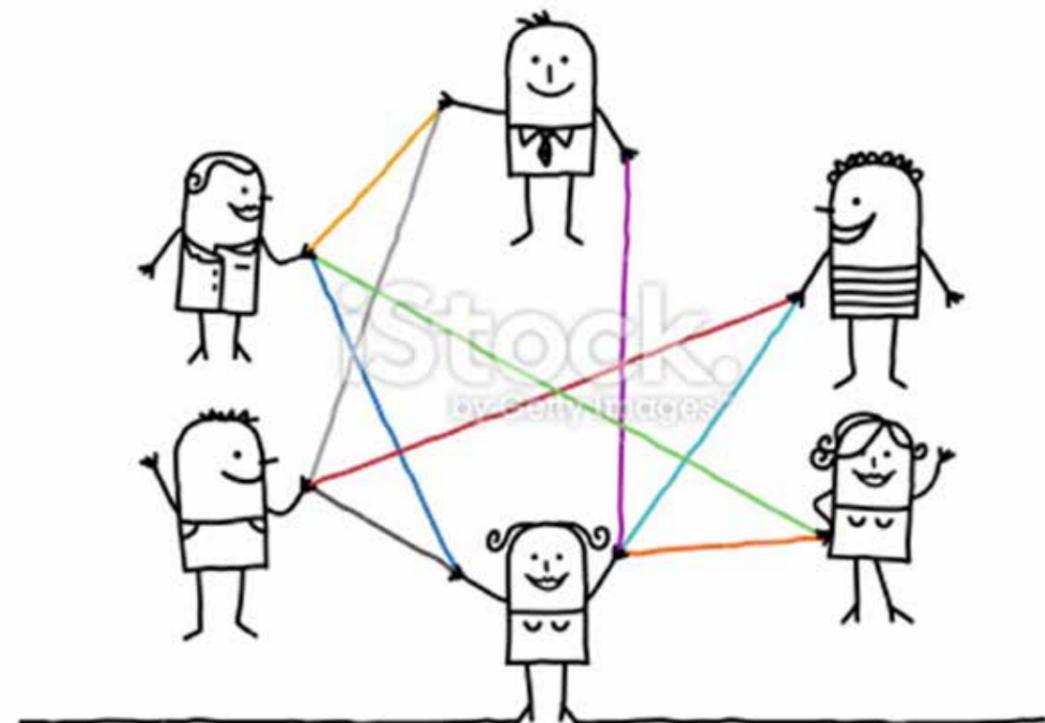
All campaigns need willing volunteers to work well, so this is another important office based role that is more accessible to participate in. This would include calling people who've indicated interest in volunteering, briefing volunteers on local issues, and thinking of creative ways to mobilise more volunteers.

Door knocking

There are many disabled members who will still be able to participate in door knocking, but it is worth taking the time to make your campaign session as open and inclusive as possible. You could:

- Buddy up new campaigners with more experienced ones, who can then shadow their buddy on the doorstep until they want to go it alone.
- Talk to your local organiser about any roadgroups that are flat, don't involve steep hills, and have shops and facilities nearby. Consider doing a walkthrough of the roadgroup to check the quality of physical access.
- Ensure you use shorter roadgroups that may be more accessible for some members.

Above all, speaking to members who have stated an access need will ensure you make the right adjustments to allow them to fully participate in your local party campaigning.



Being an effective CLP Disability Coordinator

Your CLP may wish to elect a Disability Coordinator to represent disabled members in the CLP. This job description outlines the key responsibilities of the role.

The Disability Coordinator is the key representative of disabled members within the CLP, and works to ensure that disabled members are fully involved in the work of the local party, as well as taking a leading role in making sure that the campaigning work of the constituency reaches out and engages with disabled voters.

As Disability Coordinator, you should be friendly and approachable, organised, able to run events and above all be prepared to work hard to ensure that disabled members have a real voice within the local party.

The key responsibilities of this role include:

- Making sure that disabled members are included in all of the party's activities and that meetings are relevant and accessible to disabled members.
- Reaching out to disabled people through local campaigns, and working with disability organisations in the constituency to engage voters, highlight issues, and get a better deal for disabled people.
- Bringing disabled members together to empower each other and gain the knowledge and skills they need get involved.
- Running events for disabled members, including training, policy development and social events.
- Working to recruit more disabled members into the Labour party and helping to make sure that those members make the jump from member to activist.

Listening to disabled people's views and ensuring that they are reflected in Labour's policy making.

This role is varied and exciting, and you can make a real difference to your local party through this position. You can choose how to focus your role and what to make your priority depending on what sort of activities that local members want to see.

In the work of a CLP Disability Coordinator there are two key aims:

- Building an inclusive party for disabled members-this means working to make sure that disabled members in your local party are supported, involved and engaged.
- Campaigning with disabled people- playing a leading role in making sure that your local party campaigns to champion the voices of disabled people.

To help build an inclusive party for disabled members, you may want to consider doing some of the following:

- Welcome new disabled members to the CLP, through emails, telephone contact or social events. You can encourage your CLP to issue an equalities monitoring form so that disabled members can self-identify.
- Organise training to encourage disabled members to become more involved in the party and in community activity - for example as party officers, school governors or local councillors. You could start by surveying interests and training needs of disabled members.
- Familiarise yourself with Disability Labour, the party's national affiliate representing disabled party members. There may be national events that you and other members may be interested in attending.
- Work with constituency and branch chairs to ensure party meetings are accessible and relevant to disabled members, using the information this guide.
- Work with your CLP Executive to ensure the concerns of disabled people are reflected and included in policy debates-this may include organising local policy forums or events.
- Ensure disabled members are supported to contribute to discussions and stand for the CLP executive and other positions.

The other part of your role involves looking outside of the party to your local community, and exploring how your CLP can engage with disabled voters. You may want to consider organising the following:

- Make contact with local branches of disability organisations, set up consultation meetings, exchange speakers and run a joint campaign in the local community.
- Organise local policy forums and discussions for disabled members and supporters with the wider community.
- Lead a campaign that affects disabled people in the local area and identify key stakeholders in that can get involved, such as local disability charities and organisations.

If you have any questions about the role of CLP Disabilities Coordinator get in touch with the National Women and Equalities Officer on equalities@labour.org.uk

Disability Organisations

British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD)

BILD provides guidance to organisations to enable them to support people with learning disabilities.

Bild.org.uk

Disability Rights

A campaign organisation run by disabled people, campaigning to remove societal barriers ensure disabled people can participate equally as full citizens.

Disabilityrightsuk.org

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

EHRC is a non-departmental public body with responsibility for the promotion and enforcement of equality and non-discrimination laws in England, Scotland and Wales.

Equalityhumanrights.com

Leonard Cheshire Disability

Leonard Cheshire provides support to disabled people through a variety of different services including care at home, residential care and training, and aims to to change attitudes to disability.

Leonardcheshire.org

Mind

Mind is a leading mental health charity, campaigning on mental health issues and providing guidance and services.

Mind.org.uk

People First

People First is run by and for people with learning difficulties to raise awareness of and campaign for the rights of people with learning difficulties and to support self-advocacy groups across the country.

Peoplefirstltd.com

Scope

Scope runs support services, a disability helpline, and also campaigns on disability issues.

Scope.org.uk

Labour Regional Offices

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