



# Fund to help disabled people stand for election in Wales

We want to know what you think

Please give us your views by 20 January 2021



This document was written by **Welsh Government**. It is an easy read version of '**Arrangements for the Access to Elected Office fund**'.

**Number: WG41482**

# Contents

## Page

<b>How to use this document</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Background</b> .....	<b>5</b>
The Senedd .....	5
Local Government.....	6
The Social Model of Disability .....	8
<b>The need for change</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Understanding who represents us.....	10
<b>How candidates can claim back money when they stand for Senedd and Local Government elections</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>How these rules will change for disabled candidates</b> ..	<b>13</b>
<b>Testing this new system</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>What you can use the fund for</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>How the fund will work</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>What happens next</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Hard words</b> .....	<b>18</b>

# How to use this document



This is an easy read version. The words and their meaning are easy to read and understand.



You may need support to read and understand this document.  
Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. They have been explained in a box below the word.

If the hard word is used again it is in **normal blue writing**. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 18**.



Where the document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government**. For more information contact:

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This document was made into easy read by **Easy Read Wales** using **Photosymbols**.

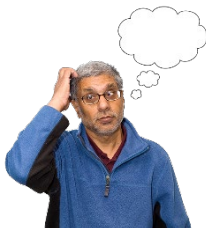
# Introduction



**We are starting a fund to help disabled candidates pay for any extra costs when they stand for election.**



This new fund is called the **Access to Elected Office Fund Wales**.  
In this document we call this **the fund**.



We would like to know what you think of our plans for the fund.



When you have read this document, please email your response form to:

[LGD.DemocracyDiversityRemuneration@gov.wales](mailto:LGD.DemocracyDiversityRemuneration@gov.wales)

# Background

The **Welsh Government** wants to increase **diversity** in everything that it does.



**Diversity** means people are not all the same. For example, people come from different backgrounds, make different choices or are good at different things.



This includes making sure disabled people can take part in the **Senedd** and **Local Government** by standing for election.

## The Senedd



The Senedd is the Parliament for Wales. The Senedd is a group of 60 people from different parts of Wales.



These people are called Members of the Senedd. There are 40 members and 20 regional members.



Members of the Senedd:

- make new laws for Wales
- speak up for people in their part of Wales

# Local Government

Local Government is made up of local councils. For example:



- county councils
- county borough councils
- community and town councils



Councils run services for people and businesses in a local area.



Council services include social care, schools, housing and waste collection.



Councils are made up of councillors.



In Wales there are many councillors representing people across Wales.



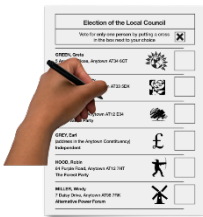
When people stand for election they put themselves forward to represent the public in the council or the Senedd. They are called candidates.



In an election the public choose the candidate who they want to represent them.



The public does this by voting for the candidate they think best represents them and their interests.



Some candidates are members of political parties. Other candidates are independent and do not represent political parties.



Some people are under-represented in government. This means there are not many people like them in elected roles.



The **Welsh Government** is committed to changing this.

# The Social Model of Disability



Since 2002 the Welsh Government has followed the **Social Model of Disability**.



The **Social Model of Disability** is a way of seeing the world. It says that people are disabled by **barriers** in society, not by their impairment.

These **barriers** can include:



- negative attitudes like thinking disabled people cannot do things
- physical barriers like stairs



The **Social Model of Disability** helps us to recognise the barriers that make life harder for disabled people.



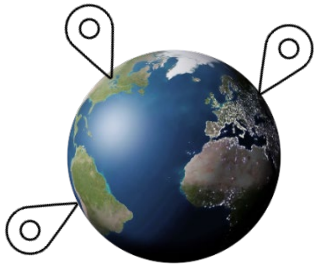
The Welsh Government is trying to remove these barriers in the way we work. We also help other services and organisations to think like this.



We want to make sure disabled people can do things that non-disabled people can do.



# The need for change



Wales is part of the **United Nations**. The **United Nations** is an international organisation made up of representatives from most countries of the world.



**The United Nations Convention rights of disabled people** says that disabled people have the same rights as everyone else.

The **United Nations** says that disabled people:



- must have an equal right to live in and take part in the community
- have the right to the same choice and control as non-disabled people

## Making things equal



We want to remove any barriers that stop disabled people in Wales from doing things that non-disabled people do.



We think this would be good for both the disabled person and the country.

# Understanding who represents us

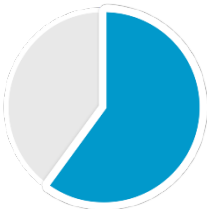


We work hard to make sure all people are represented in all levels of government.



One way we do this is by asking each councillor and candidate to fill in a survey.

This tells us what kind of people become candidates and councillors.



More than half of the people we asked did not fill in the survey. And not everybody answered all the questions.

But the most recent surveys show that most candidates and councillors are:



- over 60
- male
- white
- not working full time



These surveys show that many people are under-represented in Local Government.



Disabled people are under-represented in Local Government and the Senedd.

We want to change this as we believe disabled people:



- have an equal right to live and take part in the community



- have the right to the same choice and control as non-disabled people

# How candidates can claim back money when they stand for Senedd and Local Government elections



The law says that candidates can spend a small amount of money on their **election campaign**.



An **election campaign** is when the candidate tells people their ideas and why they should vote for them.



The law says that candidates must tell the **Electoral Commission** how much money they have spent on their **election campaign**.



The **Electoral Commission** is the organisation that makes sure elections are fair. They check that candidates do not spend too much on their **election campaigns**.

# How these rules will change for disabled candidates



A new law will come into force in November 2020.



It says that money spent on things related to disabled candidates' impairment or health condition will not be included in their expenses limit.



This means disabled candidates can access a separate fund to pay for things like taxis and Personal Assistance.



This law uses the same definition of disability as the **Equality Act 2010**. That is:

- a person has a disability if a person has a physical or mental impairment
- and that the impairment has a big and long-term negative effect of the person's ability to do normal everyday activities

# Testing this new system



We want to make sure this new fund works.

We will test the fund in these elections:

- **Senedd election in May 2021**
- **Local Government elections in May 2022**



Disabled candidates in these elections can get:

- advice on the types of support available
- money to help them with extra costs so they can take part in the election.



The organisation **Disability Wales** will look after the fund.



In December 2022 we will publish a report to say whether we think the fund works well or not.



This report will help the Welsh Government decide what to do in the future.

# What you can use the fund for

The fund can be used for things like:



- transport support



- screen reader software and other computer equipment



- British Sign Language interpreting
- accessible formats such as Braille, Easy Read and audio formats



- taxi fares



- personal assistance

It is not possible to list everything that you can use it for. This is because disabled candidates have many different requirements.

# How the fund will work



The organisation **Disability Wales** will employ a co-ordinator to manage the fund.

The co-ordinator will:

- tell people about the fund
- give candidates advice about the fund and the application process



**Disability Wales** will also set up an Advisory Board. This is a group of people who will:

- make sure the fund is working properly
- decide which fund applications will get support



## Board



The Advisory Board will be made up of disabled people.



People on the Advisory Board will have a wide range of knowledge and experience.



# What happens next



We want to know what you think about our plans for the fund.



Please answer the questions on the **response form**.



We will use what you tell us to make decisions about the fund.

# Hard words

## Diversity

**Diversity** means people are not all the same. For example, people come from different backgrounds, make different choices or are good at different things.

## Election campaign

An **election campaign** is when the candidate tells people their ideas and why people should vote for them.

## Electoral Commission

The **Electoral Commission** is the organisation that makes sure elections are fair. They check that candidates do not spend too much on their **election campaigns**.