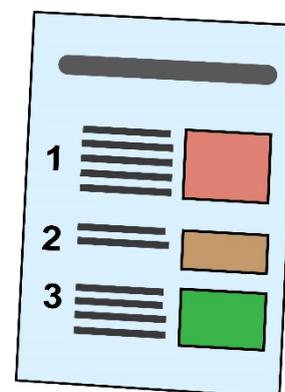


# Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance

## Disabled People's Manifesto 2019



An alliance of Disabled People  
& our organisations in England



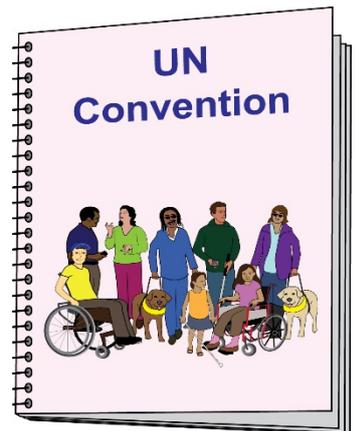
### What is this manifesto?

Disabled people and our organisations wrote this manifesto. It is for Disabled people, all political parties and the next government of the United Kingdom. It sets out our big ideas and what we want political parties and the next government to do



Our organisations are organisations run and controlled by Disabled people – often called Disabled peoples organisations (DPOs)

The manifesto says that the Government and all political parties must meet their responsibilities under the **United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities**. They must support the rights of disabled people across the United Kingdom.



**United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities:** this is an agreement that the UK Government signed up to make Disabled People's rights happen in real life.

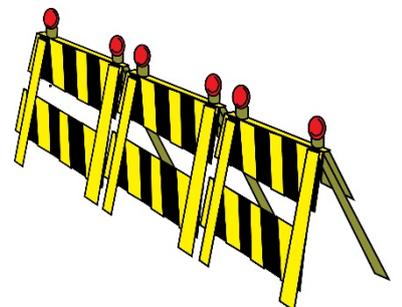
The manifesto uses a **Social Model of Disability**. This means that it is the barriers that disabled people face that push people out of society.



**Social Model of Disability:** This is when disabled people are seen as people with impairments / health conditions who are 'disabled' by the barriers in society. These barriers discriminate against disabled people and push us out of society. It is the way society is run and organised that is the problem, not the disabled person.

These barriers could be:

- Economic, this could mean not being able to access work





- Class: this is when a society is put into different groups depending on how much money they have and how they live.
- Gender
- Age
- Faith
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic identities
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and **Transgender** identities



**Transgender:** this is when a person feels that the sex that they were born with is not the sex that they are. The person can dress like or have an operation to be the sex that they feel they are.

In the Manifesto we see that we all have common reasons to fight for change. Because of this, we must join together to make sure that society includes and respects us. We do this by using the Social Model of Disability and the **Cultural Model of Deafness.**

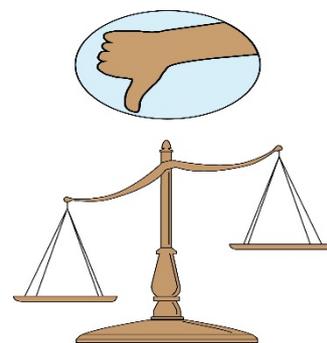


**Cultural Model of Deafness:** the Deaf community does not see being Deaf as a loss but as a different culture to be respected and celebrated.

# Things keep getting worse, not better for Disabled people

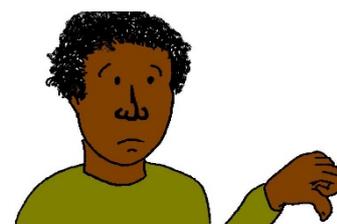
Here are some facts and figures to show what is happening:

- Disabled people are more likely to live in poverty and have been some of the hardest hit by austerity



**Austerity:** this means that the government decides to spend less money on public services and support.

- The United Nations has said that austerity has had a really bad effect on many people. They said that this is serious abuse of our rights as disabled people and some families with disabled people will 30% of their money.



- We are losing lots of very important **welfare** support

- Age UK said that 50,000 older disabled people have died waiting for social care packages. This is since March 2017. This is the same as 77 people every day.



**Welfare:** this is the money that government spends on health, social care, benefits, housing and other support given to people.



- The number of people getting social care support has dropped by 600,000.
- Many more disabled people are going to hospital because they have become ill because they don't have enough to eat



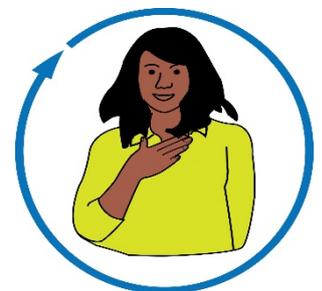
## Our Vision:

There are 13.8 million disabled people in the United Kingdom. We believe in an equal society. We think that disabled people should have human rights which allow us to take part in our communities.



To get this we need:

- A society where every person is valued, and their value is seen.
- A society that celebrates our differences and how much value this brings to society.
- A society that works to get rid of **discrimination** and **exclusion**.



**Discrimination:** this means being treated unfairly. This could be because of a person's race, age, sex or because of another part of who a person is.

**Exclusion:** this means being left out.

- A society that uses **resources** to make sure people can play an equal part in society.



**Resources:** this means money, staff, services or anything else that is needed.

Disabled people must be able to live a life where we can make our own choices. We want disabled people to have equal and easy access to opportunities. We should not be stopped from having family, friends, education, jobs and being part of communities.



We must have a welfare system that works. The state should give funding and support to disabled people. This funding should support us to be equal and to have **dignity**.



Disabled rights should be there from the beginning of our lives. We should not face struggles every day. Things like unfairness, prejudice, discrimination and being left out, should not be part of our lives.



**Dignity:** this means that a person and their opinions or wishes are important and listened to. This also means being treated with



Disabled people must enjoy the same amount of control over our lives as non-disabled people. This should be true for our everyday lives and our long-term futures.

## What needs to be done:

- We think that the government must push for our rights. Laws and rules must be put in place so that we can access and use our human rights and our rights under the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

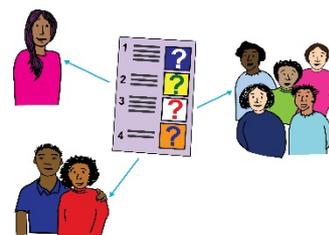


**UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:** this is an international agreement that the government signed up to, to bring about the full rights of Disabled people in the UK.

- Disabled people must have the same freedom and control over their day to day lives and long-term futures.
- Law and policy must support a society where disabled people are valued members of the community.
- The government should give support and equipment to disabled people. This will allow us to have the same opportunities and control as other people, across all areas of our lives.



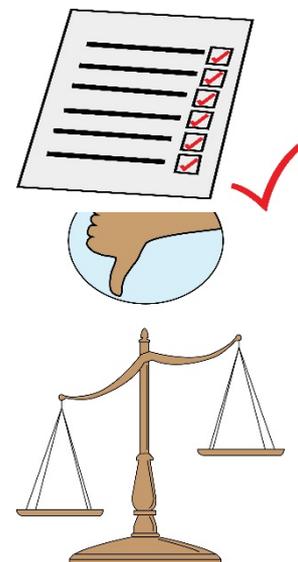
- Disabled people must be at the centre of making important decisions that affect our lives. We must help to make decisions about laws, policies, ideas and services.



## Our asks:

### 1. End austerity:

Austerity has affected disabled people much more than non-disabled people. This has had a serious effect on us, our families and services we need. Austerity goes against the responsibilities set out by the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



The government must stop cuts to services for disabled people. They should spend the same amount on disabled people's services as they did in 2010.



### 2. We need a plan to spend more money on local and national disabled people's services:

This plan should be done in **co-production** with disabled people. It must deal with the effects of austerity. It should aim to get services back on track with moving towards equality and inclusion of disabled people.



**Co-production:** Co-production (working together) means that Disabled people and decision makers are working together in an active way. They do this to plan, design and review policy and services that affect our lives, to get rid of the barriers we face.

### 3. We should have the right to Independent Living by law:

An **independent living** law needs to be made. We think that **Article 19** of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities should be put forward as a law. This right should include the **12 pillars of independent living** as its main goals.



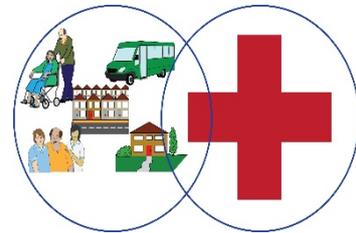
**Independent living:** this means the right to have the support to live where and with who you want and to have choice and control over how you live your life.

**Article 19:** this is the part of the UN Convention that talks about the right to independent living.

**12 pillars of independent living:** these are 12 important things that are needed for independent living like: accessible housing, enough money, access to support and equipment, and access to healthcare, accessible information and accessible transport.

## 4. We need a National Independent Living Support Service

This service should be a bigger version of the **Independent Living Fund**. It should be free to use. It should be paid for by **taxes**.



**Independent Living Fund:** this was a pot of money for disabled people so that they could cover the costs of living in the community rather than in a residential home.

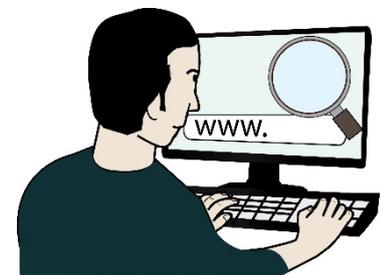
**Taxes:** this is the money paid to the government which comes out of the money that a company or person earns.

There should be local services that are run by Disabled People's Organisations, Centres for Independent Living and other public organisations.



For more information about this please go to our website:

<https://www.rofa.org.uk/independent-living-for-the-future/>



## 5. We must end the Social Care Crisis:



While the National Independent Living Support service is being built, we need support for disabled people. We will need the same amount of funding as we had in 2010.

The government should not expect us to pay towards our social care. We should not have to use social care **payment cards**.



**Payment cards:** this is a card used in some local authorities where a person's benefits are not given to them in money, but are put onto payment cards. People must then use these cards to pay for their care and support needs.

The government must keep the **Former Independent Living Fund transition grant**. They must promise not to spend the fund on anything else.



**Former Independent Living Fund transition grant:** this is a pot of money that is for people who used to get the Independent Living Fund. The money is given to people whilst they find ways to deal with the Independent Living Fund coming to an end.

## 6. Stop locking Disabled people up and close institutions.



The government must work harder to get disabled people out of **residential hospitals and homes**. People with learning difficulties and autism should be moved into community living.

**Residential hospitals and homes:** these are hospitals and homes where people live.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission numbers show that at the end of February 2019 2,295 disabled people were still living in hospitals in England. Out of these people 58% had been there for over two years. This needs to change.



We must respect the right to independent living for people with learning difficulties and autism. Community support could help us to do this.



Disabled people must be safe in residential homes and hospitals. The abuse and torture of people with autism and learning difficulties was uncovered in hospitals and homes across the country. This has to end. These hospitals and homes must be closed immediately.



## 7. We need better welfare support:

All disabled people have a right to welfare support. The government must get rid of **Universal Credit** and **benefit sanctions**. Disabled people should get the same amounts of

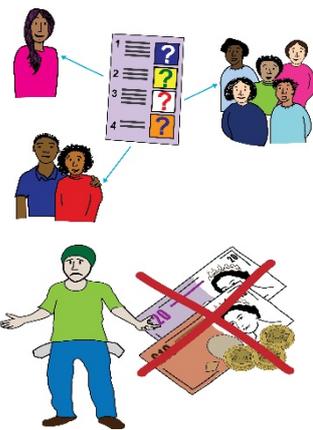


benefits as they did in 2010. They should also get extra money to cover the effects of inflation.

The government must change the way it makes decisions about disability benefits. These decisions should be made by the government organisations and not private companies.



The new benefits system must be co-produced with Disabled people. The new system should look at the barriers that disabled people face. It should also think about the extra costs that disabled people have.



The government should also get rid of **conditionality** and benefit sanctions.

**Conditionality:** this means the people can only get benefits if they do certain things or behave in certain ways.

## 8. We need better housing support:

All disabled people must have a right to accessible housing. We do not have enough accessible housing. This must be changed. We need a programme to build more houses. We need both public and private houses. The houses should meet **official standards**.



**Official standards:** these are rules about how well houses need to be kept and looked after to make sure they are safe and accessible for the people that live there.

We demand that the government gets rid of the **Bedroom Tax**. This tax affects disabled people much more than non-disabled people.



**Bedroom Tax:** this was money that the government did not charge to people who had extra bedrooms and were living in local authority houses. This has now been taken away and people must now pay for their extra rooms.

## 9. The education system must improve for disabled learners:

We need an education system which includes everybody. Disabled learners must have the right by law to take part in any education course in **mainstream education**. The education building should meet the needs of all disabled learners.



**Mainstream education:** this is where disabled students learn in the same place as non-disabled students.

Segregation must stop. Often, we end up at separate schools and colleges to non-disabled learners. The government must



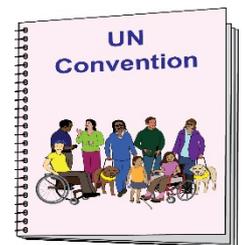
change the system so that this does not happen.

The national Special Educational Needs Department funding crisis must also end. The Government must bring **justice** and equality to education for Disabled people.



**Justice:** this means making sure decisions are fair and people are treated with respect.

To do this the Government must use **Article 24** of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Over time, this should become part of the law.



**Article 24:** this is the right to inclusive education, where disabled students study together with non-disabled students.

## 10. We need better access to Justice:

Because of government cuts to **legal aid**, disabled people have less help understanding the law. This means they do not have equal



**Legal aid:** this is support and money to cover legal costs when taking a case.

access to justice. The government must get rid of these cuts.

They must also make a plan so that disabled people can get free advice about the law. We must be able to use the law to fight discrimination. We should not face costs which stop us from doing this



Disabled people should get free support. There should be a free **mediation** service to help disabled people fight discrimination. To make this possible, the Equality and Human Rights Commission must spend more money to help disabled people get justice.



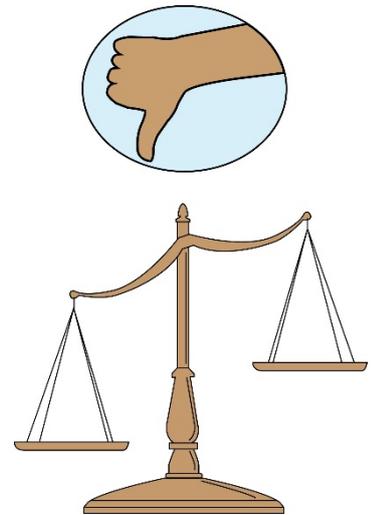
**Mediation:** this is when a person or organisation helps people to look at an issue they are having and agree on the best way to move forward.

The new system must support disabled people who need to use the law to fight for social care rights



**11. We want disabled people to be included and be able to take part:**

Disabled people face discrimination every day. Most of the time we are not able to fight it. The system is not working. At the moment, the way that the **Equality Act** is written means that people must take action when facing discrimination. Because the cases are taken by people and not organisations, organisations can feel that they do not have to make changes to meet the law.



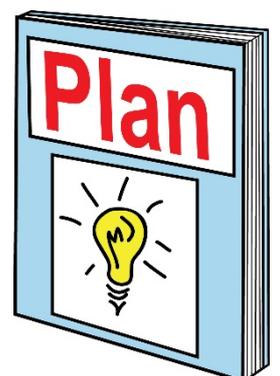
**Equality Act:** this is a law that says that people and organisations must not discriminate. They must get rid of barriers. They must make sure that everyone has the same opportunities.

This must change and it must be public organisations that make sure that the Equality Act is put into place. They must take steps to make sure we are included. They should take steps to make sure that their services, the environment and the way that things work are accessible.



We need to be able to access their services. A plan should be made about how to make sure disabled people have equal access to things like:

- Transport



- Information
- Communication

This would mean that disabled people can take part in all aspects of life in an equal way. The plan should look at how money needs to be spent in different areas to make sure that we have access.



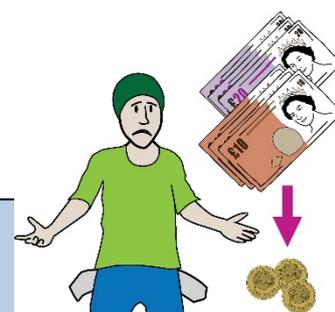
Access must be thought about when deciding which organisations can run different public services. British Sign Language needs to be recognised by the law. This would be a good way to make sure deaf people can take part in society.



## 12. We need better support in the workplace:

In the United Kingdom, there are many jobs that are: low paid and short term **zero hours contracts**.

**Zero hours contracts:** this is a contract between an organisation and a person where the organisation only gives a person work when there is work. They do not have any set hours each week or month. This means that some months they may have lots of work and other months they may have no work.



These kinds of jobs are bad for the health of disabled people. Because of this, more and more people are getting the **employment and support allowance** for mental health reasons.

**Employment and Support Allowance:** this is a benefit that people can get if they cannot get work.

Disabled people must be able to control where they work and the way they work. Such as the hours they work or where they work. If we do not have enough control, we will find it hard to keep our job.



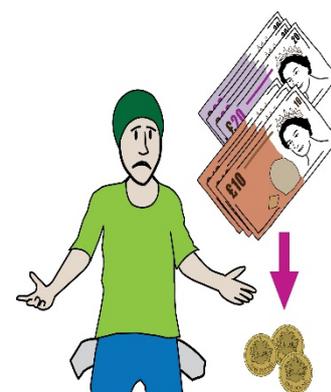
The Government needs to get rid of the Work Capability Assessment. It has been shown again and again that it does not work. The government must look at the complicated relationship between work and ill health. At the moment, the assessment process is causing harm to people who have to go through it.



The right amount of support must be brought back. Disabled people have a right to be paid when they are not able to work.



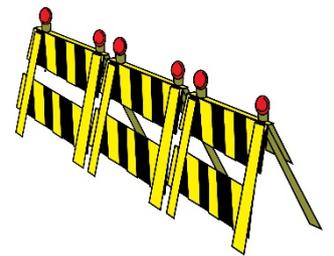
They should not have to live in poverty when they are too ill to work. They should not have to live in poverty because of barriers which stop them getting jobs. Society must move



away from the idea that work is the only ‘meaningful activity’ for humans. We need to stop the view that people who get benefits are less valued members of society.

### 13. All Disabled People must have the right to Work:

At the moment there are lots of barriers which stop disabled people from working. We must get rid of these.



There must be a plan to stop us being left out of work opportunities. This plan must be written by the Government and it should be co-produced with disabled people.



The government needs to have a bigger and better **Access to Work** scheme. They need to spend more money on supporting disabled people who want to work.



**Access to Work:** this is a pot of money that the government gives to people who need support of equipment to be able to work.

There should be laws to make sure that organisations hire disabled people. Society is



diverse and so the work place should be just as diverse.

## **14. There should be real co-production with Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations:**

The Government must work well with disabled people and our organisations. The United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities says we must work together on all issues that affect us.

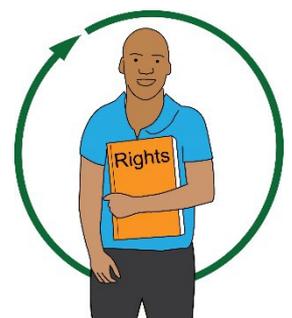


The government must work together with our organisations to make a plan for the next ten years. This plan should focus on how we can reach equality for disabled people over this time.



## **15. We need support around Brexit:**

If Brexit happens, laws and rights for disabled people might change. The government must promise to make sure the rights of disabled people are met in line with the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



## 16. We need support during the climate emergency:

The government has said that there is a climate emergency. However, they are not taking enough action to stop **climate change**. Changes to the environment put disabled people at risk. The government must think about this. Their plan to deal with climate change should support the needs of disabled people.



**Climate change:** these are changes on the earth to nature or to the weather which can have a big effect on the way that we live.

For more information about the Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance (ROFA) please go to

<https://www.rofa.org.uk/>