



SeeAbility manifesto

Our manifesto sets out the changes we'd like to see under the next government as a charity. It is written by our **Associates team**, Gabby, Emily and Greg (pictured below), who have disabilities.



(From left to right, Gabby, Emily and Greg holding up signs that say: *Adults with learning disabilities, autism, and sight loss have a right to vote*, *There are different ways to vote by post, proxy or in person*, and *Lets make it an accessible general election for all!*)

We are calling on candidates standing to be MPs to help **make inclusion a reality for people with learning disabilities, autism and sight loss** and here are four areas they can help with.

Social care

Many politicians talk about social care but when they do, they often talk about older people and how social care helps the NHS. Social care is so much more than this – it helps people have a life! Half of money spent on social care is spent on younger disabled people, yet many have seen cuts to their care or are missing out on support, with £7 billion cut from budgets since 2010. Some people with learning disabilities and autism are ending up trapped in hospital units because there isn't the right social care support in the community – this is a scandal. Social care reforms have been promised but keep getting delayed leaving people feel this isn't a priority.

We are calling for:

- ✓ Social care being built around respecting people's human rights and right to have a good life - hospital units should never become a person's home
- ✓ More funding into social care **now**, and in the long term funding provided on a national level rather than more means testing or council tax rises
- ✓ Ensuring the social care workforce is as valued as NHS staff with a national strategy and funding to reflect this as a skilled job.

Accessibility

Getting out and about can be a real problem when you have a disability. Things like pavements in a bad condition, people parking on pavements or against dropped kerbs can be dangerous for people with different disabilities. Finding a disabled parking space is hard, signs are ignored and using buses can be a problem – for example if there is no space or a ramp that can be used for your wheelchair. Buildings, even ones that should be more accessible, like hospitals, can be a problem to even get into or around.

We are calling for:

- ✓ More disabled parking spaces in local communities
- ✓ A ban on pavement parking (this has happened in Scotland)
- ✓ More accessible public transport and penalties for companies that aren't doing the right thing
- ✓ More action on making buildings like hospitals accessible

Attitudes and awareness

There are also invisible barriers to being included in society. People feel they are judged on their disability not their ability. For example, most people with a learning disability want to work but only 6% are in work. On the other hand, living with a disability comes with a lot of additional costs – so benefits are really important and it causes worry to have to keep 'proving' you have a disability. Disability hate crime is on the rise, including online abuse. Even if it is not intended, a lack of understanding or adjustments can be very serious, for example if a person needs the right healthcare.

We are calling for:

- ✓ More awareness campaigns on adjustments that can be made for people with learning disabilities, autism and sight loss
- ✓ Employers recruiting more people with disabilities
- ✓ Reform of the benefits system removing repeat assessments of people with a lifelong disability, like a visual impairment.
- ✓ Police and government tackling disability hate crime and social media companies over online disability abuse

Eye care

Children and adults with a learning disability have a much greater likelihood of serious sight problems than the general population but are much less likely to get the eye care they need. Our research suggests well over 4 in 10 children in special schools have had no history of eye care, and 6 out of 10 adults with learning disabilities need glasses and support to get used to them.

We are calling for:

- ✓ Completion of an NHS plan to introduce specialist sight tests for 120,000 children in special schools in 2020, which is based on SeeAbility's work
- ✓ NHS, health bodies and eye care professionals acting to improve eye care amongst adults and children with learning disabilities and autism

About SeeAbility

SeeAbility is the national charity that provides specialist support, accommodation and eye care help for people with learning disabilities, autism and sight loss. This year is our 220th anniversary.

SeeAbility will be working with whatever government is elected and with all elected representatives to continue to make the case for greater inclusion of people with learning disabilities, autism and sight loss in society.

November 2019