General election 2015: what are your policies for disabled people?

In the run up to the general election (7 May 2015) there will be opportunities to ask candidates and political parties their views on what they would do, if elected, to promote equal rights for disabled people. The Trades Union Congress Disabled Workers’ Committee has compiled the following list of 12 topics, all based on agreed TUC policies, that disabled people and their supporters may wish to ask of those seeking our votes.

* **The Social Model**. Will your government adopt the social model of disability (the basis of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities that the UK has ratified) and how would you use this to change the focus to that of removing barriers to disabled people’s participation and to challenge popular prejudice against disabled people?
* **Equality Duty**. Will your government restore the full extent of the Public Sector Equality Duty and extend it to cover all sectors?
* **Employment rights**. Will you (a) act to make employers comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled workers? (b) strengthen the law to prevent abuse of other policies to sack disabled workers (e.g. sickness absence)? (c) promote disability equality training to employers?
* **Employment.** How much will your government expand Access to Work and how would you improve its efficiency?
* **Gaining employment**. Existing programmes having largely failed to get disabled people into work, what will your government do to provide the support and training required by some disabled people to gain meaningful employment?
* **Stigma and prejudice**. What will your government do to challenge more strongly the stigma and prejudice associated with disability, in particular on mental health, and how would you instead promote positive images of disabled people through government, the media and education?
* **Demonization and hate crime**. What will you do to end the demonization and scapegoating of disabled people? Will you change the law to allow tougher action against those responsible for hate crime and train properly those responsible for its enforcement?
* **Benefits**. Will your government pay a sufficient level of benefits to all disabled people who need financial support to participate in society; replace the Work Capability Assessment with a simplified assessment system, and entitlement for all who need it; halt the reassessment to determine migration from DLA to PIP for those with indefinite awards; end delays to payment; and abolish the bedroom tax?
* **Independent Living**. What will your government do to guarantee the UN Convention right to Independent Living? Will you retain and extend the Independent Living Fund?
* **Education**. What will your government do to create a fully inclusive education system? Will you ensure that staff are trained and supported to promote disability equality in schools and colleges?
* **Accessible transport**. What will your government do to speed up the creation of a public transport system that is fully accessible to disabled people?
* **Participation of disabled people**. What will you do to encourage the participation of disabled people in decision-making through representative organisations? Will you reinstate the www.access-to-elected-office-fund for disabled people after it expires (March)?

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