

Leonard Cheshire Cymru 2021 Senedd Election Manifesto Calls



**Leonard
Cheshire**
Cymru



About Leonard Cheshire

Leonard Cheshire supports individuals to live, learn and work as independently as they choose, whatever their ability. Led by people with experience of disability, we are at the heart of local life, opening doors to opportunity, choice and support in communities around the globe. Our approach is underpinned by the global frameworks of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With extensive programme and policy work in the UK and internationally, Leonard Cheshire is uniquely positioned to represent the needs of disabled people across the wide range of contexts and settings in which they live.

In the UK, we are one of the largest voluntary sector providers of services for disabled people, directly supporting thousands of people. We work in local communities to provide people with opportunity, choice and support. We have accommodation services (including supported living and registered care homes) and social, education and leisure programmes - including day support, community outreach services and respite support. We deliver skills training and advice services to disabled people

through our employment programmes which aim to address the challenges disabled people face in finding and sustaining employment.

We influence disability-inclusive policy through working in partnership with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs). We also work in collaboration with various international agencies¹ and private sector businesses to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities to ensure they are not left behind as countries make progress towards the SDGs. As well as influencing policy, Leonard Cheshire delivers programmes to accelerate the inclusion of disabled people in education, employment and social protection in partnership with local DPOs in countries across Asia and Africa. Our research team works closely with policy makers, practitioners and partners to develop strong data and evidence on disability and related issues.

The next Welsh Government can ensure disabled people, both in the UK and internationally, can live, learn and work as independently as they choose by committing to the following priorities.

¹ International agencies we work closely with include the World Bank, the International Labour Organization, UNESCO, UNHCHR and the UN Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We work in partnership with the International Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium as well as partner organisations in countries in Africa and Asia.



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1

Professionalise Wales' social care workforce

The social care workforce remains undervalued and understaffed. There is a desperate need to improve the profile of social care and retain staff whilst reducing shortages. Urgent intervention is needed to stabilise and improve prospects for the social care workforce in Wales.

We are calling for all political parties to commit to:

- Prioritise social care in future budgeting.
- Recognise the impact of Covid-19 on third sector providers, and ensure a safety net is in place to support the sector in delivery.
- Establish parity of pay between healthcare and social care workers.
- Improve support and resources for carers, whilst in the profession and post, to ensure consistent and improved quality of care.
- Revise the terms and conditions for social care and domiciliary workers to improve staff retention and the public profile of the sector.
- Undertake an inquiry into the consistency and quality of social care across Wales to limit the effects of the 'postcode lottery'.



2

Promote awareness of the existence of social care funding direct payments

Recipients of social care are legally entitled to a choice about whether to receive funding in the form of direct payments (with which they can privately pay for care), or for funding to be channelled through local authorities. Both options have supporters and critics. However, many disabled people state that they are unaware of this choice.

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During the pandemic I could not obtain any PPE for the two Personal Assistants that I employ for my daughter. Welsh Government need to make sure people are aware of direct payments, and ensure phone lines and support systems are in place; a lot of disabled people often struggle with digital technology, so it can be difficult to get support when we need it.

We are calling for all political parties to commit to undertake a public awareness campaign about:

- The existence of direct payments for recipients of social care (as an alternative to funding being via local authorities).
- Recipients of social care having the decision-making choice as to whether social care funding is received as direct payments or paid to local authorities.
- Ensuring that local authorities make recipients of care funding aware that they can choose whether social care funding is received as direct payments or paid to local authorities.

3

Integration of health and social care funding

The social care sector has warned that greater emphasis needs to be placed upon creating a holistic and cohesive service, that puts the person at the heart of their care plan. Uniting the health and social care funding streams will lead to improved wellbeing in the community; minimised competition between the two sectors for adequate funding;² fewer delayed hospital discharges; fewer inappropriate care assessments and packages; and streamlined services that prioritise patients' wellbeing alongside their health.



We are calling for all political parties to commit to integrating health and social care funding, incorporating:

- Streamlined funding between health and social care, to minimise the need for competition or incompatible practices.
- Better information and technology for health and social care to allow for sharing of information and reduce incompatibility between partner services.

² Welsh Government and Swansea University: A Realistic Evaluation of integrated health and social care for older people in Wales, to promote independence and wellbeing: Interim report. 2013. Link: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-07/131015-evaluation-integrated-health-social-care-older-people-interim-report-en.pdf>

4

Put disabled people at the heart of Wales' politics

As many as one in three people of retirement age are believed to have a disability. But this prevalence is not reflected in Wales' political leadership.

Over one in five people of working age in Wales have a disability.³

We are calling for all political parties to commit to:

- Publish anonymised data on the number of self-identified disabled candidates that a party is fielding in the 2026 election.
- End – before January 2022 – electoral expenditure limits on all forms of disability related expenditure (including Easy Read and Braille versions of manifestos).
- Establish – before January 2022 – a publicly-funded access to elected office fund, which provides funding to address candidates' disability-related expenditure.

³ <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Disability/summaryofeconomicactivityinwales-by-year-disabledstatus-fromapril2013>

5

Remove barriers to disabled people gaining and retaining employment

Disabled people offer a wealth of talent, experience and perspective to the workforce, but many disabled people still face significant barriers when accessing employment. As a result, there remains a significant gap between the employment rate of disabled people and that of the rest of the population. The Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated that remote working is entirely possible in a variety of sectors, and a further commitment to actively including disabled people in the workforce post-coronavirus is recommended.

⁴ Based upon interviews and engagement with an organisation's employees.

⁵ Currently this right (provided for by the Employment Rights Act 1996, amended by the Children and Families Act 2014) is provided only for employees who have worked for an organisation for 26 weeks or more. Making a this 'day 1' right would reflect that flexible working provisions (such as compressed or staggered hours, and working from home) make a real difference to a disabled person's ability to stay in work.

⁶ Access to Work is a UK scheme which funds adjustments (technology, travel, support) that go beyond what might be considered 'reasonable' for an employer to fund; and provides direct advice and assessment. Only 14 per cent of disabled adults in Wales reported to Leonard Cheshire that they currently or previously received Access to Work support, compared to 25 per cent of disabled adults in England.

We are calling for all political parties to commit to:

- Update the existing Disability Confident Scheme to include external accreditation and evaluations on an annual basis.⁴
- Require that Disability Confident Leaders demonstrate that they employ a reasonable percentage of people who self-identify as disabled.
- Require all organisations with over 250 employees to annually publish anonymised data on the number of self-identified disabled people working for them.
- Work with the UK Government to make the ability to request flexible working an employee's right from 'day one'.⁵
- Increase awareness of Access to Work.⁶
- Adopt an ambitious target to close the disability employment gap.⁷
- Make it a condition of public funding that recipient organisations demonstrate a commitment to being a disability confident employer, with at least 10 per cent of their workforce self-identified as disabled.

⁷ An implementation plan must be a central part of this target so that government employment support programmes are evaluated according to the job outcomes they secure to bring meaningful and long-lasting change for disabled people.



Enshrine the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into Welsh Law and appoint a Disabled Persons Commissioner

In 2009, the UK signed up to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).⁸ But over a decade later the rights of disabled people are not enshrined in law, which means that they cannot take legal action if their rights are breached.

It is also high-time to establish a Commissioner for Disabled People, whose responsibilities would include promoting and championing the rights of disabled people, and investigating breaches of such rights.

We are calling for all political parties to commit to:

- Legislate to enshrine the rights of disabled people into Welsh law.
- Establish a Commissioner for Disabled People, whose responsibilities will include investigation of any breaches of the rights of disabled people.



⁸ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-human-rights-work/monitoring-and-promoting-un-treaties/un-convention-rights-persons-disabilities>

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Disabled people should be at the heart of Welsh politics. A government's greatest asset is their own people, and by default disabled people need to be included to ensure a prosperous and equal Wales.



Kyle Jamie Eldridge
Disability Rights Campaigner and Volunteer



Make Wales accessible

All too frequently, society places barriers in the way of disabled people, that stop or hinder access.

The Covid-19 lockdown has given everyone a sense of what it is like to be a disabled person without access to public **transport**. Good quality, accessible public transport can be the difference between a disabled person feeling isolated and excluded from community life, or being able to physically get out to work and socialise.

21 per cent of rail stations in Wales do not have step-free access, and at the current rate stations will not be accessible till 2070.⁹

We are calling for all political parties to commit to:

- Put in place a legally binding duty upon the Welsh Government to take all reasonable steps to ensure that all train journeys in Wales are fully accessible by 2030.
- Ensure all active travel routes include dropped kerbs at least every 100 metres to prevent wheelchair users having to take lengthy detours to cross the road.
- Reassess transport systems (buses, taxis, measurements used for wheelchair parking spaces) with the intention of removing restrictions for disabled people in Wales.

⁹ Leonard Cheshire. Trains for All Campaign, 2019. Leonard Cheshire has undertaken data analysis of the provision of step-free access in train stations in Great Britain. This data was compiled using information on the National Rail website as of October 2019. The stations were mapped by region using the ONS National Statistics Postcode Lookup database which can be accessed at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/geographicalproducts/postcodeproducts>



In 2014, our Home Truths campaign highlighted the hidden **housing** crisis in Wales: many homes are not adaptable to the needs of disabled people. Even where homes are adaptable, all too rarely do local authorities have effective accessible housing registers that enable best use to be made of adapted social housing stock. This often results in adaptations wastefully being ripped out of housing because they do not meet the needs of non-disabled people.

We are calling for all political parties to commit to:

- Ensure every new home in Wales is built to fully meet all Lifetime Home Standards.
- Review the use of accessible housing registers to ensure that there is an effective and efficient system for matching the needs of disabled people to adapted housing.
- Ensure at least 10 per cent of all new homes are built to full wheelchair accessibility standards.



Sports and social activities play a critical role in everyone's mental health and wellbeing, improving fitness and providing a vital sense of community. But all too often, disabled people are excluded from accessing facilities. Sometimes this is due to a lack of physical gym equipment. Sometimes this is due to environmental factors (for example loud music can be challenging for some people with Autism Spectrum Disorder). Sometimes this is due to a lack of understanding about the needs of disabled people, and the very fact that disabled people want to engage in sports and social activities.

Disabled people should also have as much right to access pubs as any other person. Frequently pubs lack step-free access; have tables and chairs too close together to be navigated in a wheelchair; have bars that are physically too high for wheelchair users to comfortably access refreshments; have disabled toilets that are being used as storage facilities; or have staff that question whether disabled people are allowed an alcoholic drink, because they equate disability to immaturity.

We are calling for all political parties to commit to:

- Require all local authority-owned leisure facilities to undertake an audit of their accessibility for disabled people.
- Require all local authority-owned gyms to include a minimum of three pieces of equipment that have been adapted for use by disabled people (for example, an adapted cycling-machine).
- Require all local authority-owned gyms to have at least one 'quiet hour' per day, in which loud music is not being played.
- Require all local authority-owned swimming pools to be fully accessible with hoists and changing beds.
- Feature disabled-people in any public awareness campaigns related to active travel and use of local authority leisure centres.
- Require all local authority staff operating leisure facilities to undertake disability confident training.
- Work with pubs and restaurants to improve all aspects of access for disabled people.

A lack of inclusive **play** and safe spaces for disabled children and their older counterparts can result in disabled children being inactive. A lack of social spaces that cater to the accessibility needs of disabled people is also of great concern.



We are calling for all political parties to commit to:

- Ensure that the development of any new public play space will include an accessible play survey, performed with a disability liaison or accessibility expert present.
- Prioritise funding for accessible play spaces in local communities.



8

Improve digital literacy amongst disabled people

Access to digital technology is uneven, and those with arguably the most to gain from using digital services are often the least likely to be able to do so. The Welsh Government found that only 79 per cent of people with a limiting long-standing illness, disability or infirmity use the internet, compared with 93 per cent of those without such a condition¹⁰ – this imbalance needs to be addressed.

Only 79 per cent of disabled people in Wales use the internet, compared with 93 per cent of non-disabled people.

We are calling for all political parties to commit to:

- Increased funding for the provision of training, ICT and Wi-Fi equipment to disabled people in Wales to improve digital inclusion and tackle loneliness and isolation.

¹⁰ Welsh Government, Internet use and digital skills (National Survey for Wales) 2018-19, <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-09/internet-use-and-digital-skills-national-survey-wales-april-2018-march-2019-207.pdf>

9

Retain the UK's global leadership on disability inclusion in international development programmes

On 16 June 2020, the UK Government announced the merger of the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to establish the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).¹¹ It is vital that the new Office continues to champion the inclusion of disabled people in its work, so that no one is left behind in these countries' commitments, ambitions and actions to move towards sustainable development.

We are calling for all political parties to commit to engaging with the UK Government to ensure that:

- The UK continues to meet its legal commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of GDP to international aid, allocating this in line with agreed OECD-DAC definitions of Official Development Assistance (ODA).
- The new Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office commits to continued implementation of DfID's Disability Inclusion Strategy 2018-2023, ensuring that people with disabilities will be at the centre of international development activities.
- The UK's commitment to 12 years of quality education for all girls is upheld, and that girls with disabilities are fully included in all efforts to achieve this.
- The UK remains committed to ensuring equality of opportunity to decent work for all in low- and middle-income countries, recognising that the most marginalised, including disabled people, require particular support to gain and retain meaningful employment.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-merger-of-department-for-international-development-and-foreign-office>



Want to get involved?

Please contact our policy and campaigns officer Emma Burke

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