

Political Party Disability Commitments

General Election Manifestos 2024

The Voluntary Organisations Disability Group (VODG) is the membership body for disability charities. Our members provide direct support including services for disabled people (children, young people and adults), carers and families.

This document brings together in one place key manifesto commitments from the main parties in England, on disability-related policy and issues affecting disabled people's lives.

Liberal Democrats manifesto – Published 10 June 2024

[The Liberal Democrats' manifesto](#) outlines a comprehensive approach to disability and social care issues. In healthcare, they propose ending out-of-area mental health placements, extending youth mental health services, and modernising the Mental Health Act. For social care, they pledge to introduce free personal care, create a National Care Agency, and improve support for unpaid carers, including establishing a Carer's Minimum Wage. In education, they aim to tackle the SEND provision crisis, while in employment, they propose strategies to support disabled people into work and introduce 'Adjustment Passports'. Welfare reforms include improving PIP assessments, establishing an Independent Living Taskforce, and reducing the Universal Credit wait time. The manifesto also addresses British Sign Language (BSL) usage, palliative care legislation, and enhancing accessibility in media and sports, demonstrating a broad commitment to improving life for disabled individuals across various sectors.

Health

- End out-of-area mental health placements by increasing capacity and coordination between services, so that no one is treated far from home.
 - Extend young people's mental health services up to the age of 25 to end the drop-off experienced by young people transitioning to adult services.
 - Introduce regular mental health check-ups at key points in people's lives when they are most vulnerable to mental ill-health.
 - End inappropriate and costly inpatient placements for people with learning disabilities and autism.
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- Modernise the Mental Health Act to strengthen people's rights, give them more choice and control over their treatment and prevent inappropriate detentions.
- Create a statutory, independent Mental Health Commissioner to represent patients, their families and carers.
- Develop and implement a post-pandemic strategy for supporting people who are immunocompromised.
- A new legal right to maintain contact in all health and care settings.
- Increase access to clinically effective talking therapies.
- Take an evidence-led approach to preventing and treating eating disorders and challenging damaging stigma about weight.
- Make prescriptions for people with chronic mental health conditions free on the NHS, as part of our commitment to review the entire schedule of exemptions for prescription charges.

Police

- Introduce a target of one hour for handover of people suffering from mental health crisis from police to mental health services.
- Ensure that all forces have a mental health professional in the control room at all times.
- Support the police to achieve adequate levels of training in mental health response.

Care

- End the postcode lottery of service provision and provide national, high-quality care for everyone who needs it by:
 - Providing predictable, consistent funding for free personal care.
 - Increasing transparency and accountability as to how money is spent through local authorities.
 - Creating a National Care Agency to set national minimum standards of care.
 - Enabling individuals to transfer their care package so they don't feel stuck in their current locality due to their care needs.
- Give unpaid carers a fair deal by:
 - Increasing Carer's Allowance and expanding eligibility for it, as set out in chapter 10.
 - Raise the amount carers can earn and introduce an earnings taper to end the cliff edge.
 - Introducing a statutory guarantee of regular respite breaks for unpaid carers.
 - Introducing paid carer's leave, building on the entitlement to unpaid leave secured by the Liberal Democrats.

- Making caring a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and requiring employers to make reasonable adjustments to enable employees with caring responsibilities to provide that care.
- Introducing a Young Carers Pupil Premium as part of an Education Guarantee for young carers.
- Make careers in social care more attractive and value experienced staff to improve retention by:
 - Creating a new Carer's Minimum Wage, boosting the minimum wage for care workers by £2 an hour, as a starting point for improved pay across the sector.
 - Creating clear career pathways, linked to recommended pay scales, which put an end to the undervaluing of skills in the sector.
 - Creating a career ladder to allow flexibility to work across the NHS and social care, allowing staff to gain experience in both.
 - Creating a Royal College of Care Workers to represent this skilled workforce.
 - Expanding the NHS Digital Staff Passport to include the care sector.
- Recruit more staff to the sector with a social care workforce plan, akin to the NHS England workforce plan, that includes ethical international recruitment.
- Ensure every care setting has electronic records.
- Expand virtual wards and invest in technology that allows treatment at or close to home.
- Develop a digital strategy for tech-enabled lives.

Education

- Tackle the crisis in special educational needs provision, and help to end the postcode lottery in provision, by:
 - Giving local authorities extra funding to reduce the amount that schools pay towards the cost of a child's Education, Health and Care Plan.
 - Establishing a new National Body for SEND to fund support for children with very high needs.
 - Provide free access to sign language lessons for parents and guardians of d/Deaf children.
- Give local authorities with responsibility for education the powers and resources to act as Strategic Education Authorities for their area, including responsibility for places planning, exclusions, administering admissions including in-year admissions, and SEND functions.

Families, Children and Young People

- Ensure that all parents can access childcare that is flexible, affordable and fair by:

- Including a specific emphasis on identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities in the new training programme for early years staff.
- Introduce a 'Tutoring Guarantee' for every disadvantaged pupil who needs extra support.

Employment Support

- Implement a targeted strategy to support disabled people into work, with specialist disability employment support.
- Provide additional support and advice to employers on neurodiversity in the workplace and develop a cross-government strategy to tackle all aspects of discrimination faced by neurodiverse children and adults.
- Bring Work Capability Assessments in-house.
- Incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into UK law.
- Implement a targeted strategy to support disabled people into work, with specialist disability employment support.
- Raise employers' awareness of the Access to Work scheme and simplify and speed up the application process. Stays with the person if they change jobs.
- Require large employers to monitor and publish data on gender, ethnicity, disability, and LGBT+ employment levels, pay gaps and progression, and publish five-year aspirational diversity targets.
- Introduce 'Adjustment Passports' to record the adjustments, modifications and equipment a disabled person has received, and ensure that Access to Work support and equipment stays with the person if they change jobs.

Welfare

- Build on the British Sign Language Act (BSL) by increasing the use of BSL in Government communications and working collaboratively with the BSL Alliance to promote and facilitate the use of BSL.
- Reform Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments. Make the process more transparent, stop unnecessary reassessments, and end the use of informal assessments.
- Establish an Independent Living Taskforce to help people live independently in their own homes.
- Adopt new accessibility standards for public spaces.
- Improve the legislative framework for blue badges.
- Give disabled people and organisations representing them a stronger voice in the design of benefits policies and processes.
- Give every disabled person the right to work from home if they want to.

- Reduce the wait for the first payment of Universal Credit from five weeks to five days.
- End the young parent penalty for under-25s by restoring the full rate of Universal Credit for all parents regardless of age.
- Introduce a social tariff to provide targeted energy discounts for vulnerable households.

Culture, Media and Sport

- Require at least 80% of on-demand TV content to be subtitled, 10% audio-described and 5% signed.
- Ensure a sustainable future for football clubs and give fans a stronger voice by requiring all clubs to have equality, diversity and inclusion action plans.
- Support and encourage campaigns to improve equality, diversity and inclusion in sport.

Palliative Care

- Give parliament time to vote on legislation on assisted dying.

Conservative manifesto – Published 11 June 2024

[The Conservative Party manifesto](#) presents a multifaceted approach to disability and social care policies, balancing expansions in support with measures aimed at efficiency and cost control. The party's proposals include progressive elements like digital health checks, technology investments, and addressing rural healthcare needs, alongside potentially controversial reforms such as simplifying assessments and tightening benefit sanctions. For mental health, they plan to expand NHS Talking Therapies and school support teams. In education, they promise more special educational needs school places. This strategy reflects an attempt to address various priorities, though it may result in differing impacts across the disability community.

The Conservatives aim to reform employment support and welfare, including simplifying PIP assessments and overhauling the fit note process. They pledge to make the UK the most accessible country globally and modernise autism and learning disability services. However, their welfare approach also includes tougher sanctions for benefit claimants.

In social care, they propose multi-year funding settlements for local authorities and reforms based on their 'People at the Heart of Care' White Paper. The manifesto also touches on palliative care, promising to follow parliament's will on assisted dying. Notably, the Conservatives plan to introduce controls on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives, which could impact disability-related programmes. Overall, their approach combines some expansions in support with a focus on reducing benefit dependency and controlling related spending.

Health

- Roll out new digital health checks to 250,000 more people every year.
- Invest £3.4 bn in new technology.
- Amend the NHS Constitution to reflect the healthcare needs of rural and coastal communities.

Mental Health

- Increase the planned expansion of NHS Talking Therapies by 50%.
- Expand coverage of Mental Health Support Teams from 50% to 100% of schools and colleges in England by 2030.
- Boost the capacity of Individual Placement and Support for Severe Mental Illness by 140,000 places.
- Pass a new law to provide better treatment and support for severe mental health needs in the first session of the next parliament.

Education

- Transform education for children with special educational needs, ending the postcode lottery of support by delivering 60,000 more school places and a further 15 new free schools for children with special educational needs.

Employment Support

- Continue the Invest in Women Task Force and the Lilac Review to encourage more female and disabled entrepreneurs.
- Look at the best way to provide support, including whether treatment or services could be more appropriate for some people than a monthly cash payment.
- Make the assessment process simpler and fairer for those with the most severe conditions.

Welfare

- Make this country the most accessible place in the world.
- Modernise autism and learning disability services.
- Change PIP assessments from September 2025 so that those with more moderate mental health issues or mobility problems who could potentially work are given tailored support.
- Overhaul the fit note process and design a new system that moves the responsibility for issuing fit notes away from GPs towards specialist work and health professionals. Test integrating this with the new WorkWell service to provide tailored support.
- Improve support for people who have guide or assistance dogs.
- Ensure that being on benefits remains a safety net, not a lifestyle choice.
- Introduce tougher sanctions rules so people who refuse to take up suitable jobs after 12 months on benefits can have their cases closed and their benefits removed entirely.
- Bring forward the new claimant review point for the long-term unemployed from 18 months to 12 months. At the claimant review, Work Coaches will set renewed conditions for claimants. If they fail to accept or comply with those conditions their claim will be closed and their benefits will stop.
- Accelerate the rollout of Universal Credit.

Care

- Give local authorities a multi-year funding settlement to support social care at the next spending review and take forward reforms in our 'People at the Heart of Care' White Paper.
- Make reforms to shape the market for older people's housing and support unpaid carers.

Palliative Care

- Follow the will of parliament on assisted dying.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Introduce controls on all Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives and spending.

Green Party manifesto – Published 12 June 2024

[The Green Party manifesto](#) presents a focused approach to disability rights and social care. The party advocates for a new legal framework supporting mental health rights and propose significant investments in special needs education, pledging £5bn for SEND provision in mainstream schools. The Greens commit to improving mental health services, including access to therapies within 28 days and a counsellor in every school. In social care, they propose a £20bn investment to introduce free personal care, improve carer pay, and support independent living. The party also aims to reform disability benefits, including a 5% uplift and changes to eligibility tests. Additionally, they pledge to defend the Human Rights Act and UK's membership in the European Convention on Human Rights. The Green Party's manifesto demonstrates a commitment to disability rights and social care reform, focusing on specific, targeted improvements in these areas.

Building a Fairer, Healthier Country

- A legal framework that supports the rights of those struggling with their mental health to be respected and to live fulfilling lives.
- Adequate support in the school system for neurodivergent children and children with special educational needs.
- Restore public health budgets with an annual increase of £1.5 bn.
- Advocate for a new legal framework for mental health conditions, funding to ensure people can access therapies within 28 days, a counsellor in every school and college, tailored provision for underserved communities, and adequate support for neurodivergent children and children with SEND.
- Green MPs will push for £5bn to be invested in SEND provision within mainstream schools. This means that all schools will have fully accessible buildings and specially trained teachers, and local councils will have the funds to properly support SEND students at school and in getting to school.

Caring Fairness, Compassion and Dignity

- To help take pressure off the NHS, Green MPs will push for investment of £20bn to:
 - Introduce free personal care along the lines successfully brought in by the Scottish Government, to ensure dignity in old age and for the disabled.
 - Increase pay rates and introduce a career structure for carers to rebuild the care workforce.
 - For those still living at home, this will enable earlier access to help maintain independence and wellbeing. For those living in residential settings, the personal care elements will be fully funded, alongside a tapered approach to other costs based on the level of income. For

those struggling to afford the accommodation element of residential care, including because their spouse is still in the family home, local authorities need to be properly funded to provide the right level of financial support.

- Elected Greens will also push for:
 - An additional £3bn to enable local authorities to provide high-quality children's social care.

Fairer, Greener Social Support

- Restore the value of disability benefits, with an immediate uplift of 5%.
- Reform intrusive eligibility tests like PIP and the unfair targeting of carers and disabled people on benefits.
- Make it mandatory for councils to provide free transport for 16-18 year old pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

Constitutional

- Defend the Human Rights Act and the UK's membership of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Labour manifesto – Published 13 June 2024

[The Labour party manifesto](#) presents a comprehensive plan for disability rights and social care reform. The party proposes creating a National Care Service with national standards and a 'home first' principle. In healthcare, Labour plans to transform the NHS app, giving patients more control over their health management. They commit to modernising mental health legislation, addressing discrimination and enhancing patient rights. For education, they promise improved inclusivity in mainstream schools and better provision for complex needs in special schools. Labour also pledges to reform employment support for disabled people, including tackling the Access to Work claims backlog and introducing disability pay gap reporting. In primary care, they aim to increase GP numbers, guarantee face-to-face appointments, and trial Neighbourhood Health Centres. The manifesto also addresses welfare reform, veterans' support, and making hate crimes against disabled people an aggravated offence, demonstrating a broad approach to disability and social care issues.

Break down barriers to opportunity

- Fund evidence-based early-language interventions in primary schools, so that every child can find their voice.
- Take a community-wide approach, improving inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools, as well as ensuring special schools cater to those with the most complex needs.
- Ensure admissions decisions account for the needs of communities and require all schools to co-operate with their local authority on school admissions, SEND inclusion, and place planning.

Build an NHS fit for the future

- Undertake a programme of reform to create a National Care Service, underpinned by national standards, delivering consistency of care across the country.
- Services will be locally delivered, with a principle of 'home first' that supports people to live independently for as long as possible.
- Enhance partnership working across employers, workers, trade unions and government and establish a Fair Pay Agreement in adult social care. This sector collective agreement will set fair pay, terms and conditions, along with training standards.
- Guarantee the rights of those in residential care to be able to see their families.
- Transform the NHS app, putting patients in control of their own health to better manage their medicine, appointments, and health needs. This will include giving performance information on local services, and notifications of

vaccinations and health checks. Patients will be able to see the medical guidelines for the treatment they should get, to hold health services to account and understand what their choices are.

Mental Health

- Modernise legislation to give patients greater choice, autonomy, enhanced rights and support, and ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect throughout treatment. Mental health legislation is also woefully out of date. The treatment of people with autism and learning difficulties is a disgrace. The operation of the Mental Health Act discriminates against Black people who are much more likely to be detained than others.
- Create a Young Futures programme with hubs across the country; these hubs will have mental health support workers.
- Provide access to specialist mental health professionals in every school – a £175 million investment paid for by revenue from applying VAT and business rates to private schools.

Employment Support

- Reform employment support.
- Devolve funding so local areas can shape a joined-up work, health, and skills offer for local people.
- Work with local areas to support disabled people into work.
- Reform or replace the Work Capability Assessment.
- Tackle the backlog of Access to Work claims.
- Introduce a full right to equal pay for disabled people.
- Improve employment support and access to reasonable adjustments for disabled people.
- Create plans to support disabled people and those with health conditions into work.
- Introduce the full right to equal pay for disabled people.
- Introduce disability pay gap reporting for large employers.

Crime

- Make hate crimes against disabled people an aggravated offence.

Primary Care

- Train thousands more GPs.
- Guarantee a face-to-face appointment for those who request one.
- Deliver a modern appointment booking system to “end the 8am scramble”.
- Incentivise GPs to see the same patient, to “bring back the family doctor”.

- Create a Community Pharmacist Prescribing Service and grant more pharmacists independent prescribing rights.
- Trial Neighbourhood Health Centres, by bringing together family doctors, district nurses, care workers, physiotherapists, palliative care, and mental health specialists under one roof.

Social Care

- Create a National Care Service.
- Develop a local partnership working between the NHS and social care on hospital discharge.
- Consult on the establishment of a Fair Pay Agreement in adult social care. This sector collective agreement will set fair pay, terms and conditions and training standards.

Health

- Digitise the Red Book record of children's health.

Waiting Lists

- Introduce 40,000 new appointments each week, during evenings and weekends – to be paid for by cracking down on tax avoidance – a £1.1 bn investment paid for by closing non-dom tax loopholes and reducing tax avoidance.
- Introduce shared waiting lists.
- Use spare capacity in the independent sector to aid in quicker diagnosis and treatment.

Welfare

- Ensure veterans have access to the mental health, employment, and housing support and in other areas they need.
- Review universal credit.

Education

- Take a community wide approach, improving inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools.
- Ensure special schools cater to those with the most complex needs.
- Require all schools to co-operate with their local authority on school admissions, SEND inclusion, and place planning.

Reform UK's contract – Published 17 June 2024

[Reform UK's Contract](#) offers limited but specific proposals related to disability and social care. In the realm of constitutional reform, they suggest restricting postal voting to the elderly, disabled, and those unable to leave their homes, which could impact accessibility for some voters. Regarding social care, their primary proposal is to establish a Royal Commission of Inquiry to investigate the current system, suggesting a desire for comprehensive review and potential reform. In healthcare, Reform introduces an NHS Voucher Scheme, allowing patients to seek private treatment if NHS waiting times exceed specified limits for GP appointments, consultant visits, and operations. It's worth noting that the Contract content provided is relatively sparse as it is not styling itself as a true 'manifesto', particularly in areas directly addressing disability issues and social care, focusing instead on broader healthcare access reforms.

Constitutional Reform

- Stop postal voting except for the elderly, disabled or those who can't leave their homes.

Social Care

- Form a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the social care system.

Health

- Put Patients in Charge with a New NHS Voucher Scheme NHS Patients will receive a voucher for private treatment if they can't see a GP within 3 days. For a consultant it would be 3 weeks. For an operation, 9 weeks. Services will always be free at the point of use.

Summary of Political Party Manifesto Commitments on Disability

General Election 2024

June 2024

VODG is the membership body for disability charities. We represent over 100 leading not-for-profit organisations which provide services to disabled people, their families and carers. We work on behalf of members to inform and influence the development of policy and practice which enables disabled people of all ages to live the lives they choose.

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