

**Social
Democrats**

PUTTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AT THE HEART OF ALL DECISIONS

*The Social Democrats Accessibility
Manifesto for Local Government*



#SustainableCommunities



Put People with Disabilities at the Heart of all Decisions

Social Democrats Councillors are fully committed to ensuring that people with disabilities are a priority in the Councils we serve in.

As a Party, we have signed up to the Disability Federation of Ireland's campaign **#DisabilityVotesCount**. We are promising that each of our elected Councillors will campaign on much better access for people with disabilities, ensure their voice is heard in all Council decisions, and ensure a plan is in place for each local authority by 2020 for people with disabilities.

The calls by the Disability Federation of Ireland are fully supported by the Social Democrats and include the following:

- **Accessibility** – Make all local public services open and accessible for people who have a disability.
- **Participation** – Ensure the participation of people with disabilities on local decision-making structures.
- **Planning** – Make sure local authorities publish an implementation plan for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by 2020.

On a practical level, a Council which adopts these calls will be focusing on issues such as ensuring there is enough housing and parking for people with disabilities, accessible playgrounds, dishing pavements, designing streetscapes so that people with disabilities are not hindered by parked cars, bins, street lights and sign posts, and a thousand other ways to make it easier for people with disabilities to **fully participate in their local community**.

The Social Democrats believe clear commitments to people with disabilities should be embedded in council strategies and plans, including County Development Plans, and where we have Councillors elected we will lead the charge on this.



We are also making the following specific commitments:

- Ensure that local authority offices meet **universal design requirements**.
- Promote **Make Way Day** in each Council area.
- Implement the National Disability Authority 'Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies' and the **NDA Accessibility Toolkit**.
- Set a minimum of **7% of social housing** to meet universal design standards, and ensure that every social housing pipeline project demonstrates at Capital Appraisal Stage the inclusion of a minimum **7 % of fully wheelchair accessible housing** with higher percentages applying for areas of higher need.
- Promote the uptake of **adaptation and mobility aids grants** to enable independent living for persons with disabilities – too many Councils don't spend their full allocation.
- Ensure that local transport vehicles comply with universal design.
- Promote the expansion of **accessible taxi vehicles**.
- Ensure that the **infrastructure for public bus, taxi and rail stops** are well maintained and are accessible for people with disabilities.
- **Expand the number of playgrounds, pools, gyms, parks and green spaces and venues that are universally designed**. In particular we want to ensure that all future Council recreational projects include accessible changing facilities - accessible toilets which include a hoist, adult sized changing bench and larger space for additional assistants, to ensure the health, safety and dignity of those with disabilities and mobility issues.
- Encourage local businesses to universally design their premises and services, and in particular, **improve access to local neighbourhood shops**.
- Ensure that people with disabilities are **consulted** on every Council decision that materially affects them
- Ensure that each Local Authority meets national targets to incrementally **increase the number of people with disabilities that are employed by the Council** to at least 6% by 2024. Latest figures suggest some Councils are doing well on this already but some have a considerable way to go.
- Ensure Local Authorities review their approved **social housing lists** and identify the number of people / households who require wheelchair accessible housing, and maintain a register of all wheelchair accessible social housing in their area and occupancy status.

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