



Nothing about us, without us

© Disability Labour 2019

MAKING CAMPAIGNING MORE ACCESSIBLE

A GUIDE FOR CLPs

All of the Labour Party benefits from including and supporting disabled members to get involved in campaigning - we have a lot to offer! This is a quick guide to make sure that your campaigning events are more inclusive and successful.

What is accessibility? Who are disabled members?

The Equality Act 2010 states that disabled people should have equal access to education, employment, goods, services, facilities and transport. This means removing obstacles that prevent, inhibit or limit participation.

You might not be aware that some of your members identify as disabled. Disability is both visible and invisible and can be mental, sensory or physical. Many disabilities involve an energy impairment which limits how much people can do at one one time or means that they need frequent rests.

A member does not have to tell you they are disabled but we should always attempt to make our events accessible and engaging regardless. You should **never** assume you have no disabled members and thus do not have to make events accessible.

Meeting access needs or Reasonable Adjustments as they are called in law, must never be treated as a burden, but a a routine part of campaign planning. All members should be listened to with respect and consideration.

Campaigning methods and what disabled people may or any not be able to do

This is not a definitive guide - ASK people what they want to do

	Speaking to voters	Travelling for extended periods	Seated and Stationary	Group activity	Outside	Inside	Solitary
Door knocking Canvassing	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
Voter ID Data Entry	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Phone banking Telephoning Canvassing	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Street stalls	✓	?	?	✓	✓	✗	✗
Delivering leaflets	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	?
Creating Social Media Posts	✗	✗	✓	?	✗	✓	✓
Photography of candidates the campaign	✓	?	?	✓	✓	✓	✗
Video making	?	?	✓	?	?	✓	?
Envelope stuffing	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓

Remember what may work for one disabled member may not work for another disabled member even if they have the same or a similar condition.

Accessible Campaigning methods

There are lots of fantastic ways to campaign to win elections for Labour! When organising campaigns, you should always aim to try and give members a variety of options to choose from as possible. We all have our strengths and a good organiser will find the right job for each activist based on what they're good at and enjoy. You should never decide what the best method of campaigning for someone is or make them feel bad or guilty for not participating. Every Labour member matters and every contribution is important. A member who does not attend a campaigning event due to their health or access needs not being met is no less committed to the Party than another member who does attend.

Campaigning Methods include but are not limited to: -

- Telephone Canvassing
- Data Entry
- Displaying a poster
- Envelope stuffing
- Canvassing door to door
- Street Stalls
- Delivering
- Digital campaigning

Delivering Leaflets

- Campaign literature often needs to be delivered by hand.
- Allow carers to attend and support
- Can be done alone or in a group.
- It may involve travelling long distances and can involve steps to houses or flats.
- You should always advertise if possible when you know a route is hilly or involves many steps or stairs or if tower blocks have lift access.
- Always provide a map that is highlighted to show which areas need delivering to. Also, provide a contact number if the deliverer has a question about the route.

- Provide a bag for the deliverer to carry leaflets.
- Make it clear when you need the leaflets to be delivered by. You should also make it clear that if a deliverer doesn't complete the route that it is okay and they can let you know so you can find someone else to complete this route. People can feel embarrassed or guilty for not completing a route but it is important to emphasise that we are a team and should help each other! Every contribution is helpful.
- A disabled member with a car may be willing to deliver bundles of leaflets (with able bodied help) to deliverers or allow their home to be a pick up point.

Telephone Canvassing or Phone-banking

This method is often regarded as 'accessible campaigning' but this is not true for all disabilities for example those with hearing impairments or who struggle with social interaction or anxiety. Don't assume because someone is disabled they will want to or feel able to phonebank. If in doubt, just ask!

Host the event in an accessible venue. (See venue section for more info)

Provide a telephone canvassing script. This should be offered in various font sizes for those with visual impairments, including 18 or 20pt. Ariel 14 pt (as used in this leaflet) is the basic starting point. Coloured paper can also be useful - ask if anyone would prefer this.

Provide training and ideally a demonstration call to show the canvasser how a call takes place. Explain Voter ID codes and provide a Voter ID code sheet in LARGE font. Coloured pens or highlighters may help some activists distinguish who they have called. If taking photos of volunteers, ask permission, especially if taking the photos with flash. If an activist does not want to be in a photo you must respect this and not make them feel uncomfortable.

- Provide refreshments including water and snacks, but check for allergies.
- Remember that during an election activists should pay a contribution towards food and drink
- Allow for breaks and show each activist where the toilet facilities are.
- Provide support if a canvasser has experienced a difficult call.
- When promoting the event, make it clear if you will be providing phones or expecting a canvasser to use their own. Chargers are always useful to have to

hand! It is important a canvasser does not leave the session with no battery or credit to get home!

- You may wish to provide rulers or card. Some canvassers use these to help them see/match up which number they're calling and make sure they use the right name.
- Some callers may wish to use earphones as not to strain their wrists by holding the phone.
- Make it clear whether callers will be in a communal room or if there are secluded spaces for callers who would prefer to be more alone.
- Allow carers to attend and support.

Voter ID Data Entry

This is a crucial part of any campaign. All of the information from canvassing needs to be entered into the Labour Party's online program - otherwise all information gathered from canvassing is lost and pointless! If we don't record who is a Labour voter we don't know how many votes we have or who to remind to vote on the day! It's a vital bit of work and is a great option for those who want to help but do not feel comfortable with the high contact element of direct canvassing. It is also seated and does not require travelling. It does require screen time and reading data off physical sheets of paper and typing which may restrict those who have limited mobility or pain in their wrists or hands.

- Ask your campaigns organiser to run a training session to explain the program to activists. It is easy to learn and only takes a 10 minute tutorial.
- Provide comfortable chairs.
- Host in an accessible building and show where the toilet are.
- Offer refreshments and allow for breaks
- Wrist rests are important as the activity does include typing.
- Allow earphones if people would like to listen to music.
- Allow carers to attend and support.

Envelope stuffing, leaflet sorting, folding

Most campaigns will have some literature that may need to be stuffed into envelopes or folded before delivery. Once this is done, the next stage is sorting into 'rounds'. This means counting or weighing enough leaflets to be delivered to every house in a road group.

These tasks can be done seated and can be good for those who struggle with the social interaction of canvassing. However, it can be quite physical and may not be ideal for those with restricted mobility in their hands, wrists or arms - for example those with arthritis or chronic pain.

- Host in an accessible venue, show where the toilet facilities are.
- Provide a full and clear explanation and demonstration of what task you would like done and how. Ask the activist if they have any questions.
- Provide a comfortable chair and a table for the task.
- Provide refreshments and allow for breaks.
- Allow earphones if people wish to listen to music.
- Provide any tools that may assist with the task e.g. an envelope moistener or ruler to help fold literature.
- Allow carers to attend and support.

Street Stalls/Distributing leaflets at busy locations

These methods are relatively high social contact but less so than canvassing. They involve distributing literature in locations with high footfall of local voters.

They can involve periods of standing but fold up chairs can be used for those who cannot stand for long periods of time.

They are predominantly outside. Check the weather and always dress appropriately. Sun protection and hats should be worn in sunny conditions. Events should be postponed in poor weather conditions.

- Provide water in summer and warm drinks in colder weather for activists.
- Always advise if there is parking locally, including disabled parking bays and the closest public transport stops.

- Allow an activist to leave whenever they wish to - make it clear that they are not obliged to stay for the whole session.
- Provide a bag for additional leaflets or a table for the street stall
- Always provide a contact number for the activists should any issues arise, especially if activists is told they are not permitted to campaign there by officials.
- Make sure that there are at least two or three people at the venue.

Displaying a poster

This is often overlooked as a campaigning tool, but it's integral to any election campaign. Posters in the local area are a visible way of showing support for Labour and Labour candidates. Name recognition is really important for a candidate so it is brilliant to have their name in as many windows as possible. Encouraging members and supporters to display a poster can be a great way to include and engage them

- Offer poster sizes, don't just decide which poster someone should have.
- Provide posters that already have double sided sticky tape so that it is easier for them to be put up.
- Don't make a member or supporter feel guilty for not putting up a poster. Some people live in politically split households or are politically restricted.
- Offer to deliver posters to members or supporters, it increases the chances of them being used.
- Not all members or supporters feel comfortable answering the phone, especially if they don't recognise the number or you are withholding your number. Sending a text can also be a good way to contact members

Canvassing / Doorknocking / Doorstepping

(More advice is available in our Accessible Canvassing Guide)

Despite this method being probably the most popular method of campaigning it can often be the most inaccessible, for a variety of reasons. The tips below aim to help make it more accessible but it's important to remember that this is not the only way to campaign. If a member does not feel comfortable doorknocking respect their choice and ask if they would like to do something different.

- Be very clear about the area where the canvassing session is taking place.
- Let people know if it is hilly, has many steps, if lifts are available in tower blocks etc.
- Provide contact details beforehand so activists can ask any questions.
- Give a clear and detailed description of the meeting point. Ideally, provide a map marking the meeting point.
- Make sure all activists have a phone number for the organiser of the session.
- Information on parking availability and the closest public transport links should be given.
- Provide a contact number if anyone is gets lost or arrives late.
- Provide a bag for any outcards or campaign literature.
- Offer to buddy a first time canvasser up with a more experience canvasser so they can watch how a conversation with a voter takes place.
- Make it clear that a canvasser does not have to stay for a full session. They are free to stop at any time, but should tell someone they are leaving.
- Always thank and encourage canvassers.
- Offer support if a canvasser has had a difficult conversation with a voter.
- Make it clear that a negative response from a voter is not a failure on the canvasser's part. Some people can be rude and abusive. Make sure activists know to report back these voters for future canvasses.
- Offer lifts to or from sessions when possible.
- Remember that people walk at different speeds.
- Organise canvassing sessions so that everyone feels included.
- When taking photographs make sure you have everyone's permission.
- Posting weather updates prior to a session can be helpful: everyone should dress appropriately and sun cream should be worn if appropriate.
- Postpone sessions in poor weather.
- Allow carers to support and attend.

Digital Campaigning

Digital and online skills are very helpful to campaigns. If you have a member who would like to design graphics or produce campaign videos, this is a great way for them to get involved. Photographs of candidates are also needed. This is less of a contact role and can often be done seated or standing for short periods. Labour have a brand integrity guide that should be consulted when creating any digital content.

- Graphics and videos can be made or edited at home or in the campaign hub, this is flexible and can be helpful for those who cannot travel or prefer to be in their home environment.
- Make it clear if you are providing any equipment or software or if the member is expected to provide their own.
- Always be clear what you would like from the member and the deadline. However, all work is voluntary and you should not get angry or annoyed if the member is unable to complete a task.
- Allow members to wear headphones to listen to music or to cut out noise when editing.
- Allow carers to attend and support.

Accessible Venues

When hosting events venues must be accessible to all members. (For a more detailed guide to the Equality Act 2010 please download a copy of the DEAL Legal Handbook from: <https://www.disabilitylabour.org.uk>)

Your CLP Disability Officer should be able to give guidance on access needs. ***The requirement for a venue to be accessible is anticipatory, you must not wait for a member to ask about wheelchair or scooter access.***

- Doors must be wide enough to fit a wheelchair (900mm).
- Ramps or lift access must be available if there is step access There must be enough room between furniture to allow a wheelchair to move freely.
- Check for dropped kerbs to ensure wheelchair users can cross the street safely. Parking should be available near by.
- Information about public transport links should be included.

- Give the length of time for the event so that activists can plan accordingly, they may need to take medication.
- Accessible toilets must have the emergency cord untied to allow it to be fully used if needed Toilets should be properly signposted.
- Tables should be the appropriate height to accommodate wheelchair users.
- A quiet room can be very useful for disabled activists to allow a break from the campaign. Make sure it has level access. The room should be properly signposted and be separate from main rooms which will be noisy.
- This not an exhaustive list - seek advice from your Disability Officer or contact Disability Labour

Accessible Information

Information about campaigning, CLP newsletters and election leaflets should be in an easy to read format.

For a more detailed information please see Disability Labour guide on producing accessible leaflets.

- If making graphics, text should always be horizontal, this makes it easier to read and a plain text alternative should always be provided.
- Videos should have closed captions or be subtitled.
- Use easy to read fonts such as Ariel or Futura or Dyslexie.
- Use a mix of capitals and lowercase letters e.g. not all caps.
- If you use images make sure you also have a text description.

Atmosphere and Breaks

A positive atmosphere and breaks are essential to the success of any campaign. Campaigns can be long and exhausting and we all need time to refuel and re-energise. It is important that everyone contributes to keep the atmosphere positive and supportive in line with Labour values

- Encourage members to take breaks whenever they need to
- Provide refreshments with appropriate warnings for food allergies.

- Support activists if they have had a difficult experience or interaction.
- Do not tolerate antisemitic, sexist, racist, transphobic, ageist, classist, homophobic or ableist behaviour or language.
- Make sure that everyone is aware of who to contact, in confidence, if they have an issue or complaint. Some people will need support with this process.
- Shaming people for not being involved in campaigning is disability discrimination and is not acceptable.

Self Care for Activists

It important that we look after ourselves and each other. Here is some tips to keep in mind when campaigning:

- Always put your health and well-being first.
- Check the weather and dress appropriately.
- Keep hydrated.
- Bring friends! Campaigning is fun so bring people who lift you up.
- Only do what you can manage. Listen to your body when it tells you need to take a break.
- Have downtime. Switch off from politics.
- Wear comfy shoes / boots
- Bring snacks and eat regularly
- Remember that every contribution is valid and makes a difference

Want to learn more about accessibility?

This is just a brief guide with information on making campaigning more inclusive for Labour Party members who are disabled.

It was originally written by Kirsten Kurt-Elli, Disabled Students Officer for Labour Students 2018-2019.

It has been updated by Disability Labour and can be downloaded from our website: <https://www.disabilitylabour.org.uk>

Please feel free to circulate and share this guide as widely as possible.

And finally.....

- Encourage your CLP elect a Disability Officer.
- Don't make assumptions about someone's disability, just ask.
- Listen to disabled members, their skills will surprise you.
- Access requirements are anticipatory
- Kindness, courtesy and thoughtful questions make a big difference
- If someone doesn't join in going to the pub after campaigning or meetings, they may not be being unsociable, but too tired or unable to cope with the noise.