

Who is eligible to join the Branch ?

All members who register with the Labour Party as a disabled member are automatically disability branch members.

You will inevitably get members who've not yet registered with the party, but are disabled and want to join the branch.

Make them welcome and encourage them to register with the party as the more member the branch has, a greater number of delegates can be elected to your CLP general meeting.

This obviously doesn't apply if you CLP has 'all member' meetings.

The branch works in the same way as any other branch and can send in motions, delegates to CLPs, and to Disabled Members Conference.

The branch elects officers, holds meetings which include the AGM.

The executive officers must include:

Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. At least two of these positions must be held by women.

The officers will also include disability officers from CLPs and up to four other members if required.

The branch works to the same standards and practices as any other branch under the CLP's influence and should be treated the same

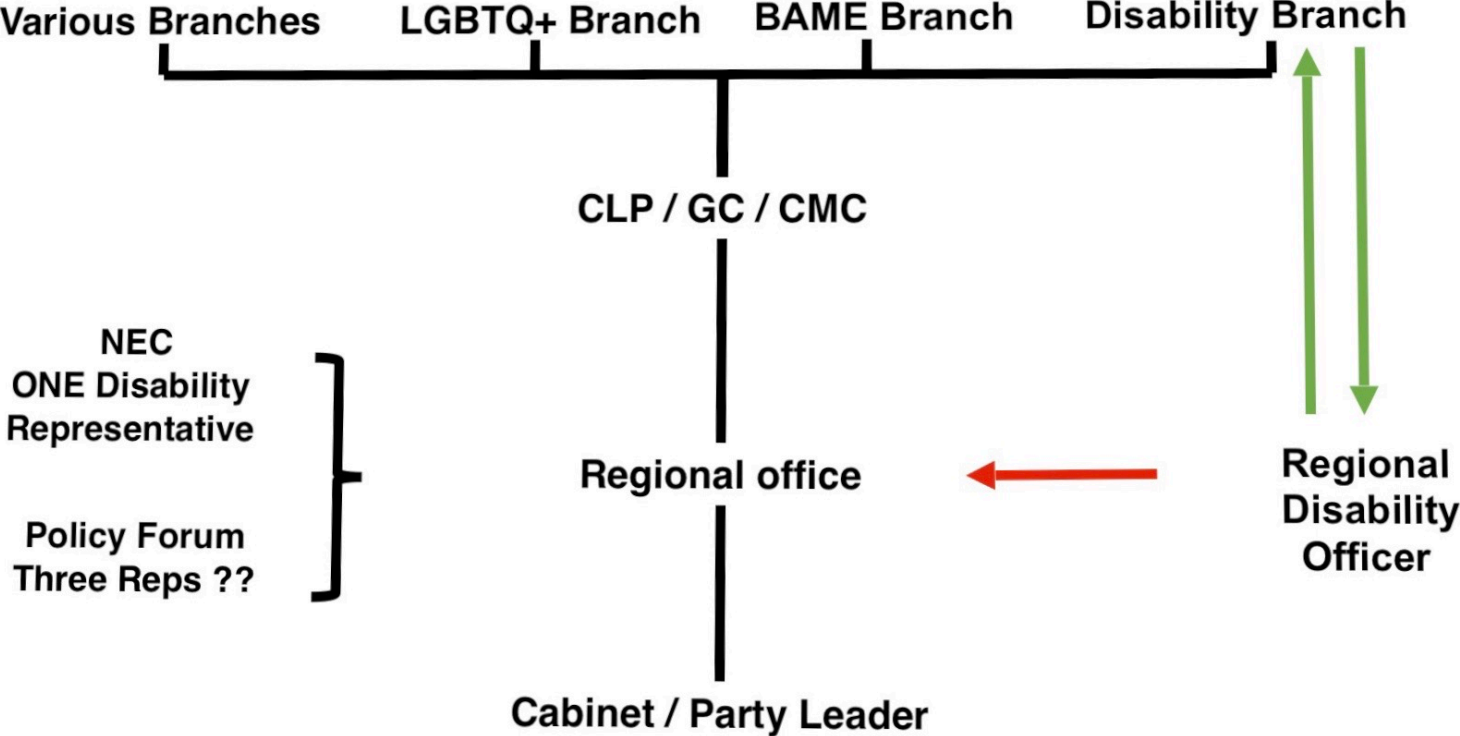
Remember:

The Branch is for disabled members **ONLY**.

Able-bodied CLP Officers should only attend by invitation and not as a regular practice.

Where does the Branch fit in?

Members



Branch Aims & Objectives

Ensure ALL disabled members have a voice and that voice is heard.

Make sure every disabled member feels welcome and confident to join in with all party activities, should they wish to do so.

To use members voices to introduce and contribute to new policy making and feed into local and national policy forums.

To empower and support disabled members to be a full and active contributors to all party activities

To empower disabled members and support them in running for elected office such as

- Officer roles within the party
- Councillors
- MPs

To build professional relationships with disabled voters in the community and to foster a inclusive environment for all new, future and current members.

To work in conjunction with disabled members in neighbouring CLPs in the delivery of the objectives.

Look at how the Branch can work with local Disabled People's Organisations, DPOs.

Think about joint campaigns, look at providing benefits advice via a reputable local service.

Considerations

Who sets up the Disability Branch?

Initially disability officers with assistance from CLPs and Disability Labour.

Where are the meetings held?

They must be held at a totally disabled accessible venue, or online. The venue **MUST** have a toilet which is fully wheelchair accessible.

When are the meetings held?

It is a good idea to hold a sub-committee with a few disabled members to discuss this. A good format would be one meeting a month, alternating between online and a physical meeting - when permitted.

How to access the database of disabled members?

Disability Labour are resolving this with the Labour Party access and GDPR. We will update information as we know more

Initially this should be done via your CLP and ALL members should be contacted and made aware that a disabled members branch is being set up.

Encourage members to register if they self-declare as a disabled person, if they have not all ready done so.

Sending out a questionnaire

Many DOs have asked about sending out questionnaires to understand to needs of disabled members. These can be valuable, but it is NOT ACCEPTABLE to ask members to declare their disabilities. You can ask what Reasonable Adjustments members may need. But it is contrary to Data Protection legislation to ask for or keep information about members medical conditions.

Access Audits

If you are looking a venues for meetings always do a basic Access Audit to check if the venue is suitable. Ask a member who is a wheelchair chair user to go with you so they can check that doorways are wide enough and the loo is fully accessible for wheelchair users. An Access Audit template is included at the end of this guide.

Setting up the Branch

Model One

Your CLP

↓
Disabled Members
From All Branches

↓
= Disability Branch

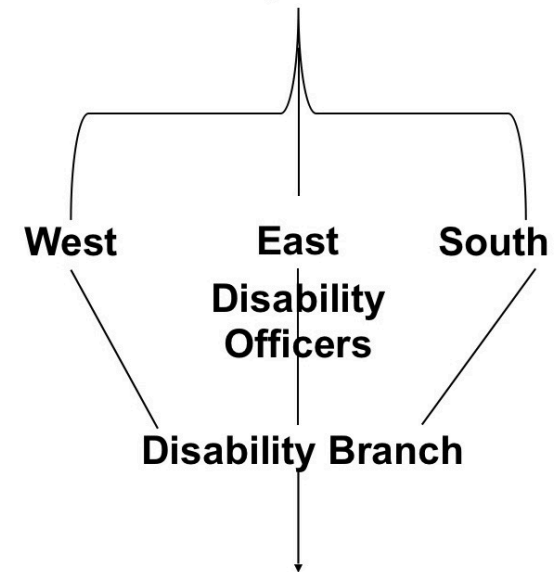
- ↓
- Easier to manage.
 - Funding could be an issue as disability is expensive.

The rules surrounding disabled member branches allow for these to cross CLP boundaries. This means it is possible to set up model one branch and then include disabled members from another CLP.

The rules state such branches should be approved by the NEC's Equality Committee. DL will be asking the Chair for clarification on how requests should be made.

Model Two

Multiple CLPs



- Harder to manage
- More funding as three sources

Funding

A proportion of member subscriptions should be allocated to the disabled members branch by CLPs

It is unclear if this funding is a set amount or a percentage. Disability Labour recommend 20% as the percentage of disabled people in the UK is 21%*

Disability Officers should liaise with their CLP and negotiate the amount for the coming year. This will need to include hire of suitable venue/s and any equipment needed.

For further information see the Labour Party Rule Book 2020, Chapter 16

The disabled members branch can raise and hold funds to support activities within the objectives of the branch.

Disability Labour is in discussions with the General Secretary as to how funding should work

It may be difficult for disabled members to raise enough funds this way so work with your CLP fundraiser to see how they can help.

Other funding options include the NEC Development Fund. This funding allows for inclusion and includes equipment and other assets and resources.

<https://labour.org.uk/about/how-we-work/national-executive-committee/nec-funding-application/>

*DWP Family Resources Survey 2018/19 - 26 March 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874507/family-resources-survey-2018-19.pdf

Meetings & Equipment

Be flexible, be accommodating, listen to members. In the first few months of setting up you may need to make many changes.

Consider equipment e.g. hearing loop, audio equipment, how to present papers, appropriate formatting and consider a laptop for in-person meetings to enable members who cannot physically present to be able to Zoom in to participate.

Always have one person responsible for making sure those on Zoom are included in the meeting as much as possible.

You may also need a mobile internet / dongle connection if the venue does not have its own WiFi.

Consider if you need people to help run the meeting - setting up chairs, teas coffees.

Think outside the box! For minute taking - use a mind map format, use icons on agendas.

Consider the space of rooms that are to be hired, toilet facilities, seating, lighting.

How and where will any equipment be stored?

Consider how you will manage any travelling or other expenses for your members - travelling whilst disabled is expensive!

Some members may need to be accompanied by a Carer, who may not be a Labour Party member. These Carers **MUST** sign a confidentiality agreement. A model form is included at the end of the guide.

Usually Labour Party meetings should not be held in buildings belonging to religious organisations or on licensed premises. Observing this rule may restrict the number of suitable venues where a Disabled Members Branch can meet.

We would encourage DOs to be flexible in their thinking when it comes to finding appropriate venues. Disability Accessibility must take priority over other considerations.

Forums

Larger more focused meeting - maybe more than one CLP

Possibly 1-2 a year to suit your disability branch

Specific aims and goals

Open up to carers and those with an interest in disability.

Consider you may need help to run this – setting chairs, teas coffees etc.

Guest Speakers will bring in more people, try asking; your local MP, a Shadow Cabinet Minister, local Council Leads for Social Care, Senior local Police Officer, Director of Social Services, your local Mayor. Disabled People Against Cuts - DPAC have lots of local groups and will often send a speaker.

Disability Labour Executive members will always be happy to speak at meetings, especially on Zoom.

Forums can focus on a specific issue e.g.

- Social care provisions
- Transport
- Local Manifesto

Consult with Disability Labour if you need any help and support.

Email: info@disabilitylabour.org.uk

or our Disability Officer Liaison - Mo Peberdy - MoP@disabilitylabour.org.uk