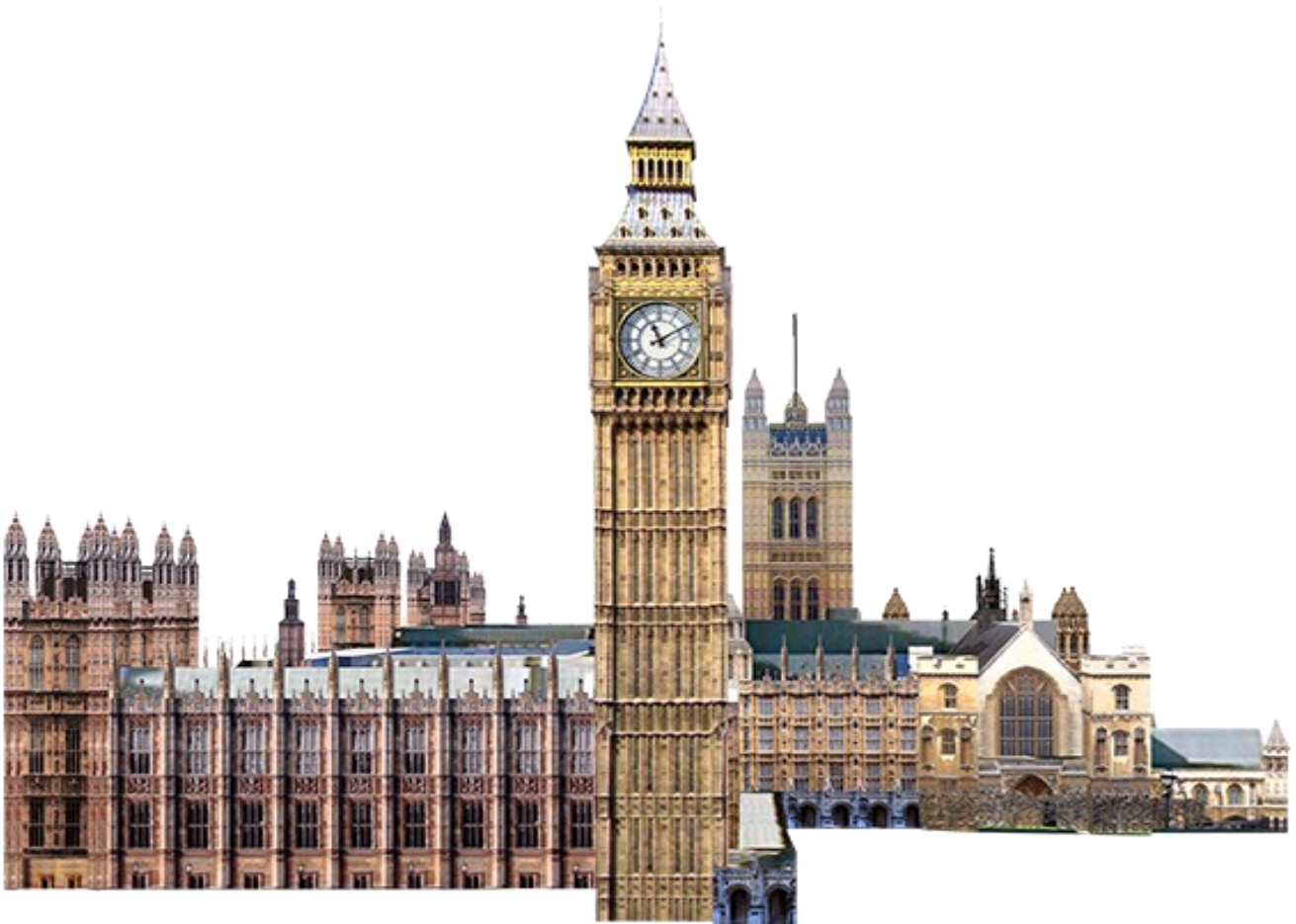




Newsletter

2017 General Election Special



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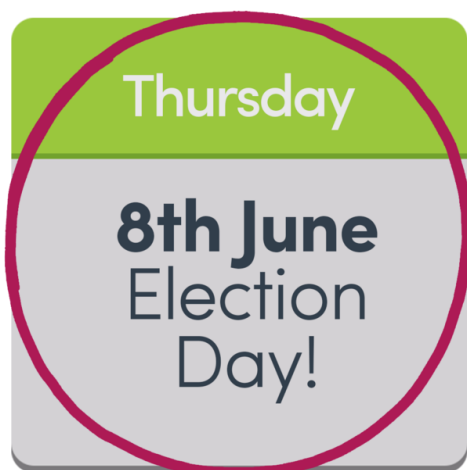
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Message from the CEO



Dear Members and Supporters,

In this very special (and long!) newsletter, we are covering the General Election.

Last time we got in touch we were asking people to make sure they are registered to vote because we want to support Deaf and Disabled people to be part of the democratic process. In this newsletter, Deaf and Disabled people and their families, supporters and friends can find out what Parliamentary Candidates say they will do to address issues which matter.

In the first section of the newsletter, (page 4) we talk a little bit about what life is like for Disabled people today.

In section two (page 6) we bring you a review of some of the policies from the three main parties, the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats.

Some readers may remember that we had organised two Quiz Your Candidates events in partnership with Focus-4-1 and Merton Mencap. We invited the candidates for the main 3 parties and for our Mitcham & Morden event, all 3 candidates said they would come. For our Wimbledon event, only the Labour and Liberal Democrat candidates said they would attend; the Conservative candidate Stephen Hammond said he would not attend the event.

Unfortunately both the planned hustings events for Mitcham & Morden constituency and for Wimbledon constituency had to be cancelled following the suspension of campaigning after the horrific events in Manchester in May.

We wanted to give people the opportunity to find out candidates' views on the issues which matter to local Deaf and Disabled people so we sent them questions on 5 key issues, asking them to stick to 250 words per question, and they all responded. You can read the completely unedited responses yourselves. The Mitcham & Morden candidates are in section 3 which starts on page 16. The Wimbledon candidates are in section 4 on page 25.

I hope you find this newsletter interesting, perhaps it will even help you with your decision. As we are independent at Merton CIL we would never tell you who to vote for. But, we respectfully suggest, please, use your vote and have a say!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lyla', on a light grey background.

Kind regards,
Lyla Adwan-Kamara, CEO of Merton CIL

Section 1: What is life like for Deaf and Disabled people Today?

Some of the barriers facing Deaf and Disabled people

Disabled people are facing disadvantage across key areas of our lives. We face barriers to employment such as inaccessible transport or work premises; difficulties getting appropriate levels of in work support; employer's discriminatory attitudes; lack of flexibility in working conditions; and lower pay.

One in five disabled people have difficulty using transport and cuts to concessionary fares and local public transport services, including staffing at stations, are leaving some disabled people isolated and unable to travel as and when they need, and there is a lack of accessible buildings and environments. Disabled people are less likely to be accessing the internet too.



The impact of welfare reform

In particular, disabled people are disproportionately impacted by the policies of Welfare Reform, resulting in an annual reduction in income of £6,354 per disabled person who uses benefits and social care. Barriers to employment, accessing the community, poverty, hardship, and homelessness can follow.

The UK is now the first state in the world to be found guilty by the United Nations of "grave and systematic violations" of Disabled people's rights, caused by the impact of the UK Government's welfare reform programme.

The Government says it spends £50bn on disability benefits. This figure actually includes spend on social care, statutory sick pay, war pensions and carers' allowance. According to a new report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, the Government will spend £24bn on working age disability or incapacity benefits in 2016/17. Some recent changes include:

- Essential support taken away from 164,000 Disabled people through changes to Personal Independence Payment
- Employment and Support Allowance cut by a third for Disabled people in the Work Related Activity Group. This will predominantly affect people with autism, learning disabilities and mental health support needs
- Work, health and disability green paper suggests extending conditionality through requiring Disabled people in the Support Group to undertake work focused interviews

Rise in Hate Crime

Disabled people are more likely to be victims of crime, and Hate Crime has been identified as a serious issue affecting disabled people. The false benefits scrounger rhetoric has been identified as one of the drivers of this issue.



Barriers to Independent Living

Disabled people, some ethnic minorities and people aged 75+ are less likely than others to perceive that they can influence local decisions.

The proportion of Disabled people who say they have choice and control over their lives is reducing.

There has been a cut in social care budgets between 2010-2015 totalling £4.6 billion. The tightening of social care eligibility criteria has removed all support from over 400,000 older and Disabled people between 2010 and 2015 and these cuts have been linked to an extra 30,000 deaths.

Barriers to inclusive education

There is a steady decline of disabled pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) in mainstream education and the expansion of grammar and selective schools risks excluding disabled pupils further.

The Local Government Association has warned about the consequences of insufficient funding of SEND provision and the school funding crisis already means that disabled pupils are being excluded from school seven times more than non-disabled peers and forced into special residential schools or psychiatric inpatient provision

The health and wellbeing of Disabled People

Disabled people have poorer health and lower life expectancy, and mental health can be impacted by the constant pressure of benefits assessments and loss of other supportive services.

Around £600 million & 15,000 mental health beds has been cut from mental health budgets while numbers of those seeking treatment rises.

Suicides, detentions under the Mental Health Act and unexpected mental health patient deaths have all risen.



Section 2: What do the election manifestos promise?

What is a manifesto?

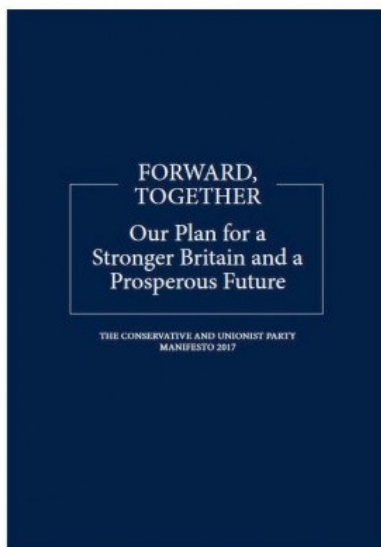
A manifesto is a publication issued by a political party before a General Election. It contains the set of policies that the party stands for and would wish to implement if elected to govern.

What do the manifestos say?

We have highlighted some of the key election manifesto promises over the next few pages. The manifestos themselves are large documents and there has been lots of coverage in the press, so, we are only going to talk about policies relating to:

- Addressing barriers facing Disabled people
- Addressing the impact of welfare reform
- Supporting Independent Living
- Tackling Hate Crime
- Supporting inclusive education
- Promoting the health and wellbeing of Disabled people

If you want to review the manifestos yourself, they are available on party websites. Or click on the links below:



<https://www.conservatives.com/manifesto>

<http://www.labour.org.uk/index.php/manifesto2017>

<http://www.libdems.org.uk/manifesto>

You can also find links to the accessible versions of the Labour and Liberal Democrat manifestos on our website www.mertoncil.org.uk. There were no accessible Conservative manifestos at the time of writing this newsletter (31/05/2017). You can also find links to other party manifestos on our website.

How do the parties promise to address the barriers facing Disabled people?



Conservative party

"We will get 1 million more people with disabilities into employment over the next ten years. We will harness the opportunities of flexible working and the digital economy to generate jobs for those whose disabilities make traditional work difficult."

- Review disabled people's access and amend regulations if necessary to improve disabled access to licensed premises, parking and housing
- Create a new presumption of digital government services by default and an expectation that all government services are fully accessible online, with assisted digital support available for all public sector websites

"We will transform how mental health is regarded in the workplace. We will amend health and safety regulations so that employers provide appropriate first aid training and needs assessment for mental health, as they currently do for risks to physical health. We will train one million members of the public in basic mental health awareness and first aid to break the stigma of mental illness."



Labour Party

"We will change the culture of the social security system, from one that demonises people not in work to one that is supportive and enabling."

- Strengthen access to justice for people with disabilities by enhancing the 2010 Equality Act, enabling discrimination at work to be challenged. Give all workers equal rights from day one, whether part-time or full-time, temporary or permanent.

"Commission a report into expanding the Access to Work programme."

- Reform the legislation governing taxi and private hire services, introducing national standards to guarantee safety and accessibility. Introducing legal duties to improve railway accessibility for disabled people.

"Sporting events must be open and accessible to all. We will push sports authorities to make rapid improvements on access provision for fans with disabilities."



"To make sure that autistic people are able to access the whole of their community and to put an end to social isolation, Labour will set the ambition to make our country autism-friendly."

- Labour will give British Sign Language full recognition as a recognised language.

Liberal Democratic Party



"Increase accessibility to public places and transport by making more stations wheelchair accessible, improving the legislative framework governing Blue Badges, setting up a benchmarking standard for accessible cities, and bringing into effect the provisions of the 2010 Equality Act on discrimination by private hire vehicles and taxis."

- Continue the Access for All programme, improving disabled access to public transport as a key priority
- Set up a benchmarking standard for accessible cities

Addressing the impact of welfare reform



Conservatives

- No plans for further radical welfare reform in this parliament but continue the roll-out of Universal Credit
- Means test Winter Fuel Payments - the money released will be transferred directly to health and social care
- For pensioners - maintain free bus passes, eye tests, prescriptions and TV licences, for the duration of this parliament



Labour party

- Winter Fuel Allowance guaranteed as a universal benefit
- Increase Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) by £30 per week for those in the work-related activity group, and repeal cuts in the Universal Credit limited capacity for work element; Increase Carer's Allowance by £11 to the level of Jobseekers' Allowance

“Labour will scrap the punitive bedroom tax, which has caused many people to be evicted from their home and their community.”

- Implement the court decision on Personal Independence Payment (PIP) so that there is real parity of esteem between those with physical and mental-health conditions;

“We will change the culture of the social security system, from one that demonises people not in work to one that is supportive and enabling. As well as scrapping the Conservatives' punitive sanctions regime, we will change how Jobcentre Plus staff are performance-managed.”

- Scrap the Work Capability and Personal Independence Payment assessments and replace them with a personalised, holistic assessment process that provides each individual with a tailored plan, building on their strengths and addressing barriers
- End reassessments for people with severe long-term conditions
- Scrap cuts to Bereavement Support Payment.
- Reform and redesign Universal Credit, ending six-week delays in payment



Liberal Democratic Party

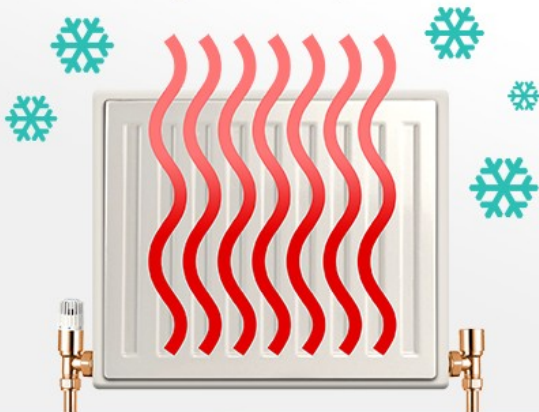
- Update working-age benefits at least in line with inflation
- Abandon the two-child policy on family benefits and abolish the two children 'rape clause'
- Reverse cuts to housing benefit for 18-21-year-olds and increase the rates of Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit for those aged 18-24 at the same rate as minimum wages
- Reverse cuts to Employment Support Allowance to those in the work-related activity group
- Increase Local Housing Allowance (LHA) in line with average rents in an area
- Scrap the 'bedroom tax', whilst also incentivising local authorities to help tenants 'downsize'
- Withdraw eligibility for the Winter Fuel Payment from pensioners who pay tax at the higher rate (40%)
- Ensure that those using food banks are aware of their rights and how they can access hardship payments where relevant
- Let both parents earn before their Universal Credit is cut and also reverse cuts to the Family Element
- Reverse cuts to Work Allowances in Universal Credit

Scrap the Work Capability Assessment and replace it with a new system, run by local authorities according to national rules, including a 'real world' test that is based on the local labour market

Benefits



Winter
Fuel
Payments



Benefits

NEW



Personal
Independence
Payment



Supporting Independent Living



Conservative party

"We will build on the proud Conservative record in supporting those with disabilities, including the landmark Disability Discrimination Act of 1995. We want to see attitudes to disability shift as they have for race, gender and sexuality in recent years: it should be completely unacceptable for people with disabilities to be treated negatively."

- Enact a Great Repeal Bill, converting EU law into UK law. Will not bring the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights into UK law. Will look into repealing or replacing the Human Rights Act once the process of Brexit has finished
- Align the future basis for means-testing for domiciliary care with that for residential care, so that people are looked after in the place that is best for them
- The value of the family home will be taken into account along with other assets and income, whether care is provided at home, or in a residential or nursing care home. A single capital floor, set at £100,000 - no matter how large the cost of care turns out to be, people will always retain at least £100,000 of their savings and assets, including value in the family home. Since the manifesto was published, Theresa May has stated that there will be an "absolute limit" on the amount that people pay for social care
- Improve standards of care for those with learning disabilities and autism. A green paper to improve the quality of care and reduce variation in practice. Promote technological solutions to prolong independent living. Statutory entitlement to carer's leave from work
- First new Mental Health Bill for thirty-five years. Recruit up to 10,000 more mental health professionals.
- New NHS numbers are not issued to patients until their eligibility has been verified

**"Our system of care for the elderly is not working for the hundreds of thousands currently not getting the dignified and careful attention they deserve, nor for the people and organisations providing that care, nor is it sustainable for today's younger people who will potentially one day face care costs themselves. It is not fair that the quality of care you receive and how much you pay for it depends in large part on where you live and whether you own your own home.
65 Where others have failed to lead, we will act."**



Labour party

“Labour supports a social model of disability. People may have a condition or an impairment but they are disabled by society. We need to remove the barriers in society that restrict opportunities and choices for people with disabilities. We will build on the previous Labour government’s commitment to people with disabilities in 2009 as signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and incorporate it into UK law.”

- Retain the Human Rights Act. Enhance the powers and functions of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, to challenge discrimination
- Implement the principles of the Ethical Care Charter, already adopted in 28 council areas, ending 15-minute care visits and providing care workers with paid travel time, access to training and an option to choose regular hours
- Create a National Care Service, which will be built alongside the NHS, with a shared requirement for single commissioning, partnership arrangements, pooled budgets and joint working arrangements - in its first years, the service will require an additional £3 billion of public funds every year, enough to place a maximum limit on lifetime personal contributions to care costs, raise the asset threshold below which people are entitled to state support, and provide free end of life care. Increase the Carer’s Allowance for unpaid full-time carers to align the benefit with rates of the Jobseeker’s Allowance
- Ensure that everyone with a long-term condition, such as those with diabetes, will have the right to a specialised care plan, and access to condition-management education
- Increase the social care budgets by a further £8 billion over the lifetime of the next Parliament

Liberal Democratic Party



- Oppose any attempt to withdraw from the ECHR or abolish or water down the Human Rights Act.
- Implement a cap on the cost of social care.
- Develop a Carer’s Passport scheme to inform carers of their NHS rights
- “Our longer-term objective will be to bring together NHS and social care into one seamless service – pooling budgets in every area by 2020 and developing integrated care organisations.”

“Defend human rights by opposing any attempt to leave the European Convention of Human Rights.”

“Save the NHS by putting a penny in the pound on income tax to give the NHS and social care services the cash they need.”

- Create a cross-party health and social care convention, bringing together stakeholders from all political parties, patients groups, the public and professionals from within the health and social care system to carry out a comprehensive review of the longer-term sustainability of the health and social care finances and workforce, and the practicalities of greater integration

Tackling Hate Crime

Conservative party



- We will lead a global effort to close down online spaces for those who abuse children, incite violence or propagate hate speech
- we will push forward with our plan for tackling hate crime committed on the basis of religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity

Labour party



“Labour will strengthen access to justice for people with disabilities by enhancing the 2010 Equality Act, enabling discrimination at work to be challenged. We will ensure that under the Istanbul Convention, disability hate crime and violence against women with disabilities is reported annually, with national actions plans to address these issues.”

- Labour will bring the law on LGBT hate crimes into line with hate crimes based on race and faith, by making them aggravated offences.

Liberal Democratic Party



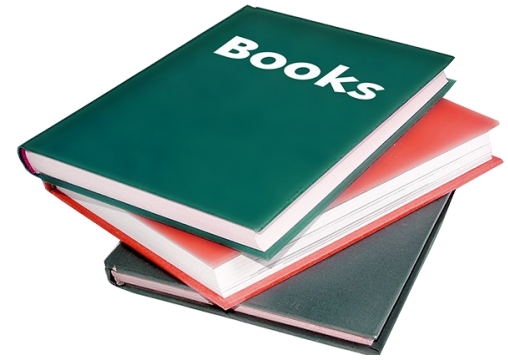
- Making the positive case for immigration and reducing hate crimes by targeting the people who commit them and making all hate crimes aggravated offences, allowing for harsher sentencing of perpetrators
- Tackle bullying in schools

Supporting inclusive education



Conservative Party

- New national retraining scheme - with costs of training met by the government, with companies able to gain access to the Apprenticeship Levy to support wage costs during the training period



Labour Party

- Scrap Conservative plans for schools to pay the apprenticeship levy
- Extend schools-based counselling to all schools to improve children's mental health
- Deliver a strategy for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) based on inclusivity, and embed SEND more substantially into training for teachers and non-teaching staff, so that staff, children and their parents are properly supported
- Free, lifelong education in Further Education (FE) colleges, enabling everyone to up skill or retrain at any point in life
- Set targets to increase apprenticeships for people with disabilities, care leavers and veterans, and ensure broad representation of women, BAME, LGBT and people with disabilities in all kinds of apprenticeships
- Reintroduce maintenance grants for university students.
- Abolish university tuition fees



Liberal Democratic Party

- Ensure that all teaching staff have the training to identify mental health issues and that schools provide immediate access for pupil support and counselling
- Reinstatement maintenance grants for the poorest students



Promoting the health and wellbeing of Disabled people

Conservative party



"It was Conservatives in government that gave parity of esteem to the treatment of mental health in the National Health Service."

- Address the need for better treatments across the whole spectrum of mental health conditions.
- Make the UK the leading research and technology economy in the world for mental health, bringing together public, private and charitable investment. Work with providers of everyday essential services, like energy and telecoms, to reduce the extra costs that disability can incur

Labour party



"In order to protect services, we will ring-fence mental health budgets and ensure funding reaches the frontline. We will end the scandal of children being treated on adult mental health wards and stop people being sent across the country, away from their support networks, to secure the treatment they need by bringing forward the ending of out-of-area placements to 2019."

- Invest in early intervention by increasing the proportion of mental health budgets spent on support for children and young people.
- Ask the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to evaluate the potential for increasing the range of evidence based psychological therapies on offer.

Liberal Democratic party



"Make waiting times for mental health care match those for physical health care."

- Move towards a health and social care system that empowers and encourages people to better manage their own health and conditions and to live healthier

Section 3. Hear from the Mitcham and Morden Candidates

As an introduction, we would like you to introduce yourself and tell us what do you think are the major barriers facing Disabled people, across the full spectrum of disability, in this constituency, and what would you do as MP to address them?



Alicia Kearns, Conservative

Hello, I'm Alicia Kearns, the Conservative candidate for Mitcham and Morden. Until October I worked at the Foreign Office, where I led campaigns for the Government to defeat the terrorist group Daesh (ISIS), as well as supporting communities within Syria, Iraq and the UK. I spent my summer volunteering in Greece, helping refugees to land safely and supporting unaccompanied minors. Before that I worked at the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Justice. I now work leading campaigns to counter violent extremists,

and build community cohesion to prevent future conflict. I live with my fiancé and enjoy reading and singing in my spare time. I also volunteer for Jigsaw4U, a charity supporting children in foster care in Mitcham, and we also foster kittens for Battersea Dog and Cat Shelter.

Everybody has the right to pursue a fulfilling and dignified life, yet disabled people still encounter too many barriers to independence on a daily basis. This can range from straightforward mobility issues to gaining support for mental health services. Indeed, a significant barrier continues to be that people often discount disabilities that are not immediately visible, not always out of malice, but often out of a lack of awareness.

Another major barrier is the problem of aligning government and local service provision with people's needs. Every person's circumstances are different, whether it be the nature of their support network, their work patterns or the disability itself. As a country we must strive to ensure everybody has the support they need to live and work independently. As your MP – I would be a key representative in instances where a person's needs and their provision do not adequately align: advocating for you. However, rather than only remediating – it is an MP's duty to be proactive in soliciting systemic change, working with government departments to ensure the system works locally and nationally.

One area I would like to look at is contracts awarded to firms providing fitness-to-work assessments. Whilst I agree that assessments should be made, I am concerned that incentives may exist within these organisations that skew outcomes away from the interests of those with disabilities – whereas the correct purpose of an assessment is to be an independent medical opinion. Providers should be able to demonstrate the robustness of their assessments, with financial penalties for instances where initial assessments are reversed on appeal.



Siobhain McDonagh, Labour

My name is Siobhain McDonagh, I was born and have always lived in the constituency of Mitcham and Morden, where I have been the Labour MP for the last 20 years. During that time I have worked on behalf of many people with disabilities, both adults and children. The barriers facing disabled people have worsened in difficult economic times as they are dependent on public services to a far greater degree. Cuts in local government funding affect those dependent on Council services, while cuts in benefits limit individuals and families prospects of living what might be considered a normal life. But greater barriers exist in terms of the public views of the potential of those with disabilities, making it more difficult for

disabled people to access education and employment. I hope that in the last 20 years I have assisted my constituents with the difficulties they face related to both public services and wider societal difficulties.



Claire Mathys, Liberal Democrat

My name is Claire Mathys and I'm the Liberal Democrat candidate for Mitcham and Morden. I have lived most of my life in South West London, have a background working in public sector finance and have been involved in organising community projects, including family fun days and setting up a scheme for volunteers to garden for people who find it difficult to do it themselves.

I am determined to break down the barriers facing Disabled people in our area. Firstly, in housing. There is a chronic shortage of accessible and adaptable affordable housing and it needs to change. Liberal Democrats will make an extra £3 billion available for housing associations to build many more affordable homes, including in Mitcham and Morden, and this will include sufficient numbers of accessible homes for those that need them.

I would put pressure on Merton Council to ensure that their proposed housing company builds enough affordable housing – 40% of all homes, in line with their target, rather than the lower figure they have currently proposed – and that they also build enough accessible homes to meet the needs of Disabled people in Merton.

I am also concerned about Disabled people living in private rented homes, which are the most expensive and least secure form of housing. There can be huge barriers for people moving at short notice if the landlord ends the contract or sells up. I would push for longer tenancies of at least three years to give people greater certainty in where they live, as well as additional measures to tackle rogue landlords through compulsory licensing.

Affordable, accessible transport is another key area where people with disabilities can face barriers. Much more needs to be done to ensure transport is truly accessible for those with visual and auditory impairment as well as physical disabilities, and I believe wheelchair users must be given priority over children's buggies when space is limited on trains and buses. I would also ensure that the new provisions on discrimination by private hire vehicles and taxis are properly enforced.

Many readers will know of the funding crisis in our NHS and social care services which affects waiting times, quality of service, facilities and access to drugs. Liberal Democrats would increase spending on health and social care by £6 billion a year, funded by adding a penny on income tax. We will also integrate health and social care better, so that patient information is given to the right people and patients can be treated in their own homes more rather than in hospital.

I am horrified that the South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust have apparently decided that only children with a diagnosed mental health condition will be eligible to be assessed for an autism diagnosis. This will prove an obstacle for those children who may not have existing mental health issues but need a diagnosis to gain access to specialist schools, higher levels of support, Disability Living Allowance and to give more certainty to parents.

I am also concerned about the barriers Disabled people face in the workplace, with some employers and Jobcentre staff having negative perceptions resulting in higher levels unemployment among disabled people. I would challenge any discrimination that was brought to my attention and review the sanction procedures in Jobcentres, as well as encourage employers to engage more on the issue and work to remove barriers to employment.

Our top 5 questions for candidates:

1. At the end of last year, the UK became the first state to be investigated by the UN Disability Committee and found guilty of grave and systematic violations of Disabled people's rights due to welfare reform. In just one example, 2,500 Disabled people are expected to lose out in Merton during the transfer from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payments. How will you support Disabled constituents left with no income as a result of benefit changes, delays, and sanctions?



Alicia Kearns, Conservative

It is absolutely right that anyone who needs support receive it. That's why money for disability benefits is at a record high. The Conservative Government has spent around £50 billion a year helping people with disabilities, but we also helped over half a million disabled people return to work – benefitting from the independence employment brings. We have committed to no further radical welfare reform in the next parliament. Instead we will continue to ensure that the Disability

Living Allowance, and the Personal Independence Payment (which is replacing it) are excluded from our benefit cap, and spending will increase in real terms.

However, I recognise there were delays in assessing some potential PIP recipients and this is unacceptable, so I would work with any constituents affected if I become your MP to consolidate recent improvements and make sure you get the support you and your families need.

Siobhain McDonagh, Labour



As the MP for Mitcham and Morden over the last 20 years, undertaking casework on behalf of my constituents has been my priority. I would continue to believe that helping people in difficulty or without money to be my priority. I have developed working relationships with all the sections of the DWP, and where I cannot find a resolution to someone's difficulties through the normal channels, I will use the opportunities parliament provides to raise individual cases. As with Tina from Morden where a question to The

Secretary of State for Work and pensions saw her benefits immediately reinstated and backdated.

Claire Mathys, Liberal Democrat



In February, Lib Dems fought to block the changes to Personal Independence Payments which the Conservatives were set on making. In our manifesto we commit to updating working-age benefits at least in line with inflation, to increasing the Local Housing Allowance in line with average rents in an area, to scrapping the 'bedroom tax' and to replacing the discredited Work Capability Assessment with a better system run by local authorities.

I will fight for the rights of Disabled constituents who suffer as a result of benefit changes. It is unacceptable for anyone to be left with no income and the mark of a tolerant society is ensuring everyone has the support they need and is treated with respect.

2. The proportion of Disabled people who say they have choice and control over their lives is reducing, and cuts to services are undermining Disabled people's dignity and independence. How will you support independent living for Disabled people?



Alicia Kearns, Conservative

As a Conservative I believe that choice, and equipping each of us to be able to shape our own futures, is of utmost importance. I have always supported independent living for disabled people.

We have built a strong safety net for disabled people by increasing spending on disability benefits by more than £3 billion in real terms since 2010. For those who are able to, helping more disabled people into work provides the stability of a regular salary and the opportunity to direct your own life. We should be attuned to the specific circumstances of each individual person – if an adaptive car allows a worker to carry on commuting and receiving a salary – then we should have the discretion to make that judgement. In these instances, losing the entitlement to a car can not only increase the overall cost of care but jeopardise independence and quality of life.

We must work with communities and businesses to confront outdated views about disabilities. The Conservatives' 'Disability Confident' campaign is showcasing the talents of disabled people to employers around the country: challenging myths that create barriers and prevent disabled people from being given opportunities.



Siobhain McDonagh, Labour

The closure of the Independent Living Scheme and its transfer to local government in the last parliament, puts the independence of people within the scheme at risk because of the huge cuts to local government funding. I will support Merton in its attempts to protect funds to disabled people and will continue to highlight the concerns of my constituents in parliament through the use of adjournment debates and by contributing to those debates on the needs of people

with disabilities.



Claire Mathys, Liberal Democrat

All services for Disabled people should be built around supporting independence and giving people as much control over their own lives as possible, on everything from health to financial independence.

We must invest in our social care services so that more Disabled people can live independently wherever possible and receive the

care they need in the place they want to live. That's why I believe we need additional funding for social care, funded by an extra penny on income tax, and better integration of health and social care.

As your MP I would stand up for people against other bodies – like Merton Council. Local Lib Dems fought at a council level to stop Merton being one of only 8 councils not to use the adult social care precept in 2016/17 and we campaigned for its use in 2017/18. We were also the only ones arguing for Merton Council to ring-fence the Independent Living Fund monies to give reassurance to residents who rely on this income.

3. 500 disabled people a year in Merton experience Hate Crime. What will you do to tackle this?



Alicia Kearns, Conservative

Hate crime is utterly unacceptable. I'm saddened to hear so many disabled people are experiencing this in our communities. I want to hear from you if you are a victim of hate crime, and together we can identify the support and justice open to you.

Throughout my career, I have always sought to give a voice to those whose voices have been silenced. I will be your voice and help you navigate the criminal justice system. I think it's important that we make sure the police know how to recognise hate crime against disabled people, and support them to pursue prosecution if they wish.

I also support the ideals of Restorative Justice, whereby the victim meets the offender – at the victim's discretion. This is a powerful tool designed so that perpetrators appreciate the severity of their crime and its impact. This scheme often helps markedly with the recovery of the victim and is effective in reducing reoffending rates.

But in addition to helping victims of hate crime get the justice they deserve, I also want to raise awareness in schools of hate crime against disabled people, to ensure we have the toughest possible legislation to prosecute perpetrators, and make our community spaces and activities as accessible and welcoming as possible. I'd also like to see more celebration of the achievements of our disabled residents in our local media.



Siobhain McDonagh, Labour

To the best of my recollection, no constituent has ever contacted me about an incident of hate crime but if this did happen I would of course contact the Borough Commander and where relevant the local NHS and Care Quality Commission (CQC) and I would be happy to work with Merton CIL and learn more about their concerns regarding hate crime.



Claire Mathys, Liberal Democrat

Hate Crime is always totally unacceptable and must be taken extremely seriously. We need to ensure individuals are held to account for their crimes and that there is proper action taken, and monitoring of incidents, by police forces and other public authorities. We need far more investment in community policing and a reversal of the Conservative cuts to the number of police officers.

As your MP I will promote community programmes which seek to reduce hate crime and build a more positive, inclusive society, and I will challenge the rhetoric used by the media and public life in relation to disabled people.

Restorative justice programmes also have an important role to play in empowering victims of hate crime by giving them a voice, while changing the behaviour of offenders as they start to take seriously the impact of their crime.

4. How will you ensure a fully inclusive education system, ensuring that local academies and free school do not discriminate against Disabled pupils and all schools have sufficient funding to support Disabled pupils?



Alicia Kearns, Conservative

I attended my local comprehensive school where students with complex physical and educational needs were fully integrated. They received additional support in the classroom where needed, as well as physiotherapy, speech therapy and more personal support. So for me, it was totally normal to have people with disabilities completely integrated in school.

I recognise that some people feel integrated schooling isn't right for them, and I fully respect that. But it is deeply important to me that young people become part of a community where they are treated equally, where we learn to embrace one another's uniqueness, and where we all share aspirations.

I will always advocate for integration and crack down on any suggestion of discrimination, working with head teachers, the funding agency for academies and free schools, and advocacy groups who represent disabled communities locally to make positive change and ensure funding is in place to support needs in the classroom.



Siobhain McDonagh, Labour

I would be more than happy to contact the sponsors of our local academies or free schools regarding their policies and procedures on the inclusion of pupils with a disability. I do think that it is very important that parents and pupils with disabilities have a choice as to whether they would like mainstream or special schooling. I am always impressed with the work of both Cricket Green and Perseid schools in my constituency. The most immediate priority will be to

convince South West London & St George's Mental Health Trust to continue

diagnosing children with autism, as without this diagnosis they will not get the educational, housing or financial support that they and their families need.



Claire Mathys, Liberal Democrat

The current education system is not as inclusive as it should be. Successive waves of institutional, curriculum and qualifications reform have been rolled out without the interests of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) being properly considered. The Government is then forced to 'bolt on' additional guidance when it remembers its statutory duties.

I would support parents in Merton who have children with SEND who are finding it increasingly hard to navigate the increasingly complex legal framework and encourage local schools to ensure that they provide full access to information about how they include children with special needs.

In addition, schools must be properly funded. Across the UK schools currently face £3 billion of cuts by 2020 and almost all of the schools in Merton will be hit. This is the most financial pressure schools have been in since the mid-1990s. Around £1.7 billion of these cuts will come to staff budgets, and teachers say that counsellors, pastoral services and other support staff will be first to go.

It is simply unfair that the pupils who need the most support will face the brunt of these cuts. Liberal Democrats will reverse the Conservative cuts and increase schools funding by £7 billion.

5. Disabled people in Merton poorer health and wellbeing than non-disabled people. Disabled people are less satisfied with life, less happy, and more anxious. What will you do to address this situation?



Alicia Kearns, Conservative

I want to help all residents in Mitcham and Morden to enjoy improved living standards, wellbeing and happiness.

I welcome Theresa May's heartfelt commitment to do more to support our mental health. She is the first Prime Minister to give mental health parity with physical health – this will benefit all of us.

Theresa May is ensuring that we have 10,000 more mental health experts in the country and personally, I'd like to see a mental health expert available at every job centre. There are more disabled people in employment than ever before. Many disabled people can work, want to work, and need our support to get into work – so I'm pleased we're making this a possibility which absolutely tackles lower levels of satisfaction.



Loneliness is something that worries me a great deal, particularly for disabled members of our communities. I will work with the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness to understand what we can do locally to help residents of Mitcham and Morden. If anything is causing you anxiety or unhappiness – rest assured I will always be a willing listener and will help in every way I can.



Siobhain McDonagh, Labour

To fully answer this question, it would be important to understand the cause of the unhappiness or anxiety. Many of the parents of young people with disabilities are often concerned that at the end of their formal education that their children are unable to obtain employment. I will continue my work experience scheme to encourage local employers to take on young people with disabilities. On a much smaller level, I will continue to be happy to organise tours of parliament for all my constituents. Many of the best and most enjoyable tours have been with groups with disabilities, including from Merton Mencap and Melrose and Cricket Green Schools.



Claire Mathys, Liberal Democrat

When access to transport, housing, employment and health and other services are improved for Disabled people, there will be a clear impact on wellbeing and people's satisfaction with life. I would support local community groups and services which seek to improve the quality of life for Disabled people in Merton and help to ensure that all those with disabilities living in Merton have information and access to the services and social groups available to them. I am passionate about increasing the level of support for people with mental health issues, and believe it is time to end the stigma around mental health and ensure that waiting times for mental health appointments are reduced in line with those for physical health. This would be a top priority for Liberal Democrats in Government and could have a huge impact on many lives.

Section 4: Hear from The Wimbledon Candidates

As an introduction, we would like you to introduce yourself and tell us what do you think are the major barriers facing Disabled people, across the full spectrum of disability, in this constituency, and what would you do as MP to address them?



Stephen Hammond, Conservative

It has been an honour to be your Member of Parliament for the last 12 years. The Conservatives are committed to ensuring that there is protection for those who need it, but also support for those who can work. That's why we spend around £50 billion a year helping people with disabilities and health conditions. I regard helping constituents with any problems as one of the most important parts of the role of a

MP, and I have always tried my best to help any disabled constituent who has come to me.

We also have rising employment of disabled people and are supporting them into work. Providing disabled people with equality of opportunity is a key priority, and we must close the disability employment gap. Of course, we need to support those who are disabled and unable to work, and I am proud that that is what this Government has done. Our manifesto is committed to helping disabled people. We will continue to ensure a sustainable welfare system, with help targeted at those who need it most. We will legislate to give unemployed disabled claimants or those with a health condition personalised and tailored employment support. We will review disabled people's access and amend regulations if necessary to improve disabled access to licensed premises, parking and housing. We will work with providers of everyday essential services, like energy and telecoms, to reduce the extra costs that disability can incur.



Imran Uddin, Labour

My name is Imran Uddin, I am a local Councillor in Merton representing the St Helier Ward. I am also chair of Friends in St Helier which provides activities and support to our elderly residents in St Helier and Lower Morden. I have been involved in charitable work all my life, including fundraising, and I am passionate about helping the most vulnerable in our society. The issues facing those with a disability are

varied and complex. This reflects the needs of this important group in our society.

There is still an issue of discrimination against those with a disability. Despite legislation, there is not enough enforcement and monitoring of compliance. I believe the government needs to support business but also place upon them the responsibility to take those measures to ensure that all members of our society can have equal opportunities to lead a decent life and gain the benefit and satisfaction of a working life.

There is a need for a more sophisticated system to target the support and care needed for disabled people. This can be achieved by some joined up thinking to ensure that the right professionals are framing policy and implementation for the different types and intensity of disability needs.

I strongly believe that we need to have a policy of empowering organisations and individuals to manage the support they get with the fundamental aim of maximising independence. The role of the voluntary and charitable sector is vital to deliver in this area and I will push for these types of measures.

Finally, there must be a fair funding formula. For too long, the Conservative Government has been cutting funding silently to local government, which in turn means that Councils are being blamed for cuts to this vital sector. This is wrong and must change. Frankly, only a Labour Government can deliver the resources and has the will to improve the lives of those with disabilities together with the wonderful volunteers and workers in this sector.



Carl Quilliam, Liberal Democrat

I live in Wimbledon with my fiancée Giorgia. I am a former civil servant and moved to London in 2011, where I have worked in several roles in local government and the charity sector. As a civil servant I promoted investment for major infrastructure projects such as offshore wind and high speed broadband. I have also worked directly for councillors in London supporting campaigns on local housing, education and transport.

I currently work for one of London's largest housing associations and support efforts to build more affordable homes and protect investment in social care services.

As the Liberal Democrat candidate for Wimbledon, I will work and campaign to ensure everyone can get on in life. That means fighting for a strong economy and stopping a bad Brexit deal that will damage jobs and investment locally. As well as defending investment in our health and care services, I will support and campaign for adding 1p on income tax to deliver an extra £6 billion a year to our health and care services.

I believe that supporting the independence of disabled people would be a vital part of my role as an MP. There is not a silver bullet solution to this but access to and inclusivity of all local services – not just public services - should be front and centre. As your MP I will:

Fight for better transport access – Lib Dems in Merton have led the campaign to get step free access at all of our local stations. Too many of our stations are still inaccessible. I would keep campaigning for better access to all forms of transport across Merton.

Support investment in services – for many disabled people social care and NHS services offer vital support to enable their independence. I have fought against the local Labour council's planned cuts to social care and would continue to fight for more investment in health and social care as your MP.

Ensure a sufficient safety net – the Conservatives have been tearing holes in our welfare safety net. Cutting much needed programmes that support people's independence. I will fight to ensure proper financial support and against unfair PIP assessments.

Campaign for more and better housing – we need more homes that are truly affordable and are accessible for a wide range of people. I will continue to fight for more affordable homes as your MP.

Support independence – across the full range of disabilities there are a wide range of barriers that people can face in their day-to-day lives some simple like the need for basic adaption's in the home and others more complex. I would work tirelessly to help tackle them and support measures to better enable people's independence.

Our top 5 questions for candidates:

1. At the end of last year, the UK became the first state to be investigated by the UN Disability Committee and found guilty of grave and systematic violations of Disabled people's rights due to welfare reform. In just one example, 2,500 Disabled people are expected to lose out in Merton during the transfer from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payments. How will you support Disabled constituents left with no income as a result of benefit changes, delays, and sanctions?



Stephen Hammond, Conservative

I strongly disagree with the conclusions reached in the report produced by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as does the Government. Individuals and organisations may disagree with the current approach to welfare reform, but I cannot accept the report's conclusion that there is evidence of grave and systematic violation of the rights of disabled people.

I think we can be proud in this country of our record in supporting disabled people to lead more independent lives and participate more fully in society. More than 20 years ago a previous Conservative Government legislated to protect disabled people's rights, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is recognised internationally as a model of anti-discrimination legislation. While the Government continues to improve and build on the support available to disabled people who are unable to work, more than half a million disabled people have also been helped to move into employment in the last three years. This is a record

which the Government can be proud of. While it is perfectly legitimate for some people to disagree with the approach which has been taken to reforming our welfare system, I think it is completely inappropriate to claim that the Government's policies are violating the rights of disabled people.

There is no need for any constituent to be left without income. I am always available to help constituents get the benefits they are entitled to.



Imran Uddin, Labour

A Labour government would scrap the work capability and personal independence payment assessments and replace them with personalised holistic assessment process to ensure that we treat each individual with the dignity and respect they deserve. This assessment will be undertaken directly by employees of government departments and not by private companies that are bound by targets and profit driven assessment processes.

It is about respect and dignity for the most vulnerable members of our society and I will fight to ensure that this is infused in our policy making.



Carl Quilliam, Liberal Democrats

In February, the Lib Dems fought to block the changes to Personal Independence Payments, which the Conservatives were set on making and voted to try and stop the cuts to the Employment and Support Allowance. In our manifesto we commit to increasing working-age benefits at least in line with inflation, to increasing the Local Housing Allowance in line with average rents and to replacing the discredited Work Capability Assessment with a better system run by local authorities. We are also committed to scrapping the current sanctions

regime, which we do not believe is effective.

We were also the only party locally arguing for the ring-fencing of the Independent Living Fund money back in 2015: http://www.mertonlibdems.org.uk/merton_s_independent_living_fund

As your MP I would do everything possible to fight for the rights of disabled constituents who suffer as a result of benefit changes. In recent years the Conservatives have been tearing huge holes in our welfare safety net - we need to repair them and ensure no one is left without an income or the support that they need and deserve.

2. The proportion of Disabled people who say they have choice and control over their lives is reducing, and cuts to services are undermining Disabled people's dignity and independence. How will you support independent living for Disabled people?



Stephen Hammond, Conservative

Around £50 billion every year is being spent on benefits alone to support people with disabilities or health conditions. The Government will continue to spend more than Labour did in 2010 in every year to 2020. Benefits related to the additional costs of disability have been uprated every year, and households in receipt of these benefits are exempt from the benefit cap.

It is also important to put welfare spending on a sustainable footing. This is why recent reforms mean new claimants to Employment and Support Allowance will in future receive the same rate as those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. While making these changes, the most vulnerable have continued to be protected; no current claimants will see their payments fall, and those in the Support Group will not be affected. The aim of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is to ensure support is focused on those with the greatest barrier to independence. The assessment of eligibility focuses on an individual's ability to carry out key everyday activities and will be easier to understand and administer.

PIP involves a more objective assessment, including a face-to-face consultation, to help target support at those who need it most. Should someone's condition change under PIP, the new system will ensure they will continue to get the right award and reduce the capacity for over- and under-payments. The system has undergone extensive independent review, and the Government has accepted a number of recommendations for improving assessments.

Imran Uddin, Labour



A Labour Government is committed to increasing the various allowances and support payments available to those with disabilities. We will also bring into UK Law the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) which will bring alive the rights available to disabled people.

This sector is ripe for reform and the various independent voluntary and charitable groups will be vital in driving reform. Government's duty is to provide that framework, which includes tackling discrimination and hate crime as well as providing financial support.

This has been lacking by this Conservative Government and it is Labour who will provide the structure, support and funding to enable real independence to come to disabled people.



Carl Quilliam, Liberal Democrats

Supporting independence should be at the heart of any service seeking to support disabled people. This covers everything from financial independence, through health and wellbeing, to ensuring services are inclusive and accessible.

At a minimum we must invest more in our social care services so that more people can live independently wherever possible and receive the care they need in the place they want to live. That's why I believe we need additional funding for social care, funded by an extra penny on income tax, and better integration of health and social care. It's also why I worked closely with our local councillor Mary-Jane Jeanes to stop Merton being one of only 8 councils not to use the adult social care precept in 2016/17, and campaigned for its use in 2017/18: http://www.mertonlibdems.org.uk/social_care_cuts_decision

Beyond that we need to reform the system for financial support to make it more people focussed and to ensure we treat people with dignity.

3. 500 disabled people a year in Merton experience Hate Crime. What will you do to tackle this?



Stephen Hammond, Conservative

Hate crimes against disabled people are absolutely unacceptable. Hate crime was first included in national policy in 2008, and since then there has been good progress in the reporting of these crimes. Police records show an increase from 800 in the first year to 2,508 in 2015/16. Disability hate crime represented 5% of police recorded hate crimes in 2014/15.

Part of the increase in reported hate crimes against disabled people may well be that more victims feel confident in coming forward. I want to see our local police continue to take hate crime seriously, treat victims with compassion and respect, so that all victims feel able and confident to report it. As part of the Government's plan for tackling hate crime, it was acknowledged that hate crime against disabled people remains a challenge. The Government has committed to look at current best practice examples in tackling disability hate crime and work with partner organisations and the police to promote safety for disabled people.



Imran Uddin, Labour

This is one of the most distressing and disgusting forms of hate crime that I can imagine. All decent people find such crimes abhorrent. We must first ensure that in our public discourse, we ensure that we respect disabled people as equals and as those deserving of respect and indeed love.

Giving disabled people respect and enabling independent living will also give them confidence to call out and challenge discrimination. We need to give them the information to enable them to take appropriate action.

Finally, we must ensure that the law is actually enforced and for this we need to have an independent monitor to ensure that any barriers to reporting or prosecuting are identified and removed appropriately.

Overall, however, we need to educate the public to understand what hate crime against disabled people actually looks like and encourage them to challenge such behaviour when they see it. It is only when a culture change happens that we will see real change.



Carl Quilliam, Liberal Democrats

The recent rise in Hate Crime is a shameful reflection on all of us. Everyone should be able to go about their lives without being subject to abuse or attacks.

We need to take a multi-pronged approach to this. First and foremost we need additional investment in community policing. Reversing the Conservatives' cuts will allow police to better respond and react to hate crime and be proactive in tackling it in the long term. Lib Dems

also want longer sentences for hate crime and a programme of restorative justice to reduce reoffending and truly tackle the root causes of offenders' behaviour. However, there is also a job to be done in challenging the rhetoric in the media and in public life more generally around the language used in relation to disabled people.

As an MP I would also work with community organisations like the Centre for Independent Living, the Squad and others in the community to tackle misconceptions and build on our sense of community here in Merton.

4. How will you ensure a fully inclusive education system, ensuring that local academies and free schools do not discriminate against Disabled pupils and all schools have sufficient funding to support Disabled pupils?



Stephen Hammond, Conservative

The system for identifying and meeting the needs of all children with SEN and disabilities is designed to deliver the right support for all children, so that they can achieve their potential and their education prepares them well for fulfilling adult lives.



Stephen Hammond, Conservative

The system for identifying and meeting the needs of all children with SEN and disabilities is designed to deliver the right support for all children, so that they can achieve their potential and their education prepares them well for fulfilling adult lives. Merton Council use the local funding formula to estimate the number of children with special education needs a school is likely to have. They are required to allocate sufficient funds to schools to enable them to meet the

additional cost of pupils with SEN, up to £6,000 per pupil per year. If the additional costs required exceed this amount the local authorities can allocate top-up funding from its high needs budget. Local authorities can also allocate additional funding from its high needs budget to schools that have a large number of SEN children.

I am very encouraged that the DfE provided an additional £92.5 million of high needs funding to local authorities for the 2016-2017 year, and I welcome that a further £130 million will be provided for 2017-2018.

You may be aware that the Department for Education has consulted on proposals for a fairer national funding formula that will ensure high needs funding is allocated based on children's needs and the schools they attend. The proposed formula ensures no local authority will receive less high needs funding than they do now, and that the local authorities that are currently less well funded receive an uplift of at least 3% in each of the next two years.



Imran Uddin, Labour

This whole area is tied into education funding, which has been and will continue to be cut under conservative governments. The implementation of the UNCRPD and the other changes that a Labour Government will implement will ensure that proper funding will be put in place. However, I have the Perseid Primary and Secondary school in my ward and I have seen first hand the effect of able bodied and disabled students working together. The school regularly works with

other schools and I am constantly moved by the emotional and physical learning between both sets of students.

We should celebrate the variety that our comprehensive state education system can promote. I believe that more of this should happen and this ultimately will bring about that culture change required to prevent the hate crime that is a scar on our society.



Carl Quilliam, Liberal Democrats

Our education system needs to be more inclusive. No school, whether an academy, free school or any other kind of school should discriminate against disabled pupils. Too often in the past governments have brought in reform of our school system without fully considering the interests of children with special educational needs and disabilities. There are a range of things we need to do to improve services, including better funding and support for schools to

do more on inclusion.

Across the UK schools face £3 billion of cuts by 2020 and almost all of the schools in Merton will be hit. Around £1.7 billion of these cuts will come to staff budgets, and teachers say that counsellors, pastoral services and other support staff will be first to go.

It is unfair that the pupils who need the most support could face the brunt of these cuts. Liberal Democrats will increase schools funding by £7 billion and reverse the Conservative cuts.

5. Disabled people in Merton poorer health and wellbeing than non-disabled people. Disabled people are less satisfied with life, less happy, and more anxious. What will you do to address this situation?



Stephen Hammond, Conservative

I believe we must focus on putting opportunity at the heart of our society. In the last three years, nearly 600,000 more disabled people have moved into work. The Access to Work scheme provides financial support towards the extra costs faced by disabled people who are looking for work or need support to stay in their job. Around 37,000 people were helped by Access to Work in 2014-15.

The Government's Green Paper on work, health and disability explored new ways of supporting disabled people and people with health conditions into work, and looking at how coordination between the health and welfare systems can be improved. This involves engaging closely with disabled people and charities to better understand the needs of disabled people and how to provide the best possible support for them to find and remain in work.

Our reforms have allowed a further £100 million of annual funding by 2020-21 for practical support to help claimants towards work, as well as spending a further £15 million through the Flexible Support Fund on meeting the extra costs that can be involved in finding a job.

The Conservative manifesto also promised a full year worth of exemption on the National Insurance Contributions for a business employing someone with a disability. We aim to get 1 million more people with disabilities into work over the next 10 years.



Imran Uddin, Labour

All of the measures I have mentioned above would contribute to better well being of our wonderful disabled residents.

We need to change our culture to embrace difference generally. We must all recognise that we are all different and we all face difficulties in our lives; whether it is temporary or permanent, mental

or physical, minor or significant. It is part of the human condition.

The more we learn this self evident truth and most importantly remind each other of this fact, the better our society will be and the more loving and respectful we will become.

As well as the significant additional support provided by a Labour Government, I think that it is the tone of our debate and conversation that will be equally important to make disability nothing more than a part of being a human and part of a humane society.



Carl Quilliam, Liberal Democrats

I think the issues I have addressed already around education, finance, health and care, better access to services and transport would all go a long way to tackling the poorer health and wellbeing of disabled people in Merton.

I would also do everything I can to support local community groups and services which seek to improve the quality of life for Disabled people in Merton. I visited the Squad 'Vets' group recently and saw the great work they are already doing for people of all ages with learning disabilities. I am also keen to ensure proper support for people with mental health issues. We need more investment in mental health services across the board – the Lib Dems are at the forefront of fighting for mental health to be treated equally to physical health and I would be a champion for that.



Inclusion London

Supporting London's Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations



An alliance of Disabled People & our organisations in England



We have gratefully used information available from the following organisations to help write this newsletter:

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/>

<https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk>

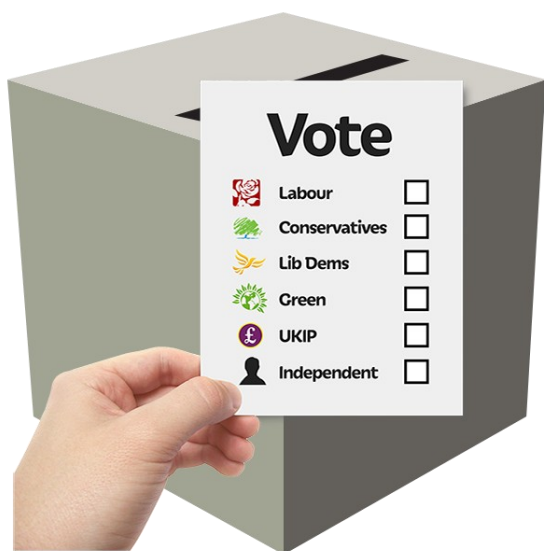
<http://www.rofa.org.uk/>

<http://www.allfie.org.uk>

Not sure you're interested in voting? Here are some things our members said in the last General Election:

"If you don't vote, you have no say at all in who represents you in government. At any election in your area, one of the candidates will be selected to represent you whether you vote or not. If you're registered, you'll have the chance to have a say on who represents you by voting."

"Around the world people have died fighting for the right to vote and be part of a democracy. This isn't meant to be a guilt trip, but less than 100 years ago in the UK, people were killed during their struggles to get the vote for women."



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