

## **General election 2019 advocacy pack for campaigners**

### **Leonard Cheshire**

Leonard Cheshire supports individuals to live, learn and work as independently as they choose, whatever their ability. Led by people with experience of disability, we are at the heart of local life – opening doors to opportunity, choice and support in communities around the globe.

General elections are a really important time for us to influence decision makers and candidates standing for election to Parliament. A pledge from a party or candidate during this period can result in real change. As a charity, Leonard Cheshire must remain politically neutral. We can't support particular parties or candidates, but we can ask candidates questions about what they will do if they are elected.

Political candidates want to know how they can support people in their local area, so do share your own personal experiences and, ask the questions that matter to you in your own words. Any details and information about your local area and community would also be great to mention when you speak to them.

### **Meeting your local candidate**

The general election is a great opportunity for you as a campaigner to speak up! You can ask your local candidate questions about the issues that matter to you. Meeting your local candidate in person is the most powerful way to raise the issues that are important to you.

You can find out the names and contact details of your local candidates online. The names of candidates who are standing for the main political parties can be found on party websites.

### **Attending a hustings event**

Hustings events take place during election campaigns and are an opportunity for one or more parliamentary candidate to take part in a debate or give a speech to the local community and organisations. Local hustings with the candidates standing for election are also a great opportunity to ask questions about how they will address the needs of disabled people.

If you do meet or contact your candidate, we have some suggested questions below that can help guide your conversation with them.



## **1. Creating a transport system that is accessible for everyone**

Good quality, accessible public transport can make the difference between seeing family and friends and being able to easily get to work. However, many train stations and journeys are inaccessible for disabled people. Our research shows that over 40 per cent of all railways stations in Britain do not have step-free access.

### **Ask your candidates:**

- What do you see as the main barrier to disabled people accessing trains?
- If you are elected, what will you do to make trains in your constituency more accessible?

## **2. Social care support for everyone who needs it**

Over one million disabled and older people in the UK receive social care support to live independently and go about their daily lives. Like the NHS, social care is a vital public service. Many disabled people rely on care and support for help with everyday tasks, like washing, dressing and eating. Social care also plays a vital role in supporting people getting into, or staying in, work, learning, and volunteering.

Cuts to social care funding means access to social care has become more restricted. More than a quarter of disabled working-aged adults (18-64 year-olds) have had their care cut over the last year. This has a devastating impact on disabled people, leaving them isolated and with less control over their lives.

### **Ask your candidates:**

- If you are elected, will you prioritise securing sustainable funding for social care that addresses the needs of working-aged disabled people?
- How will you support disabled people to live full and independent lives in our local area?

## **3. Making workplaces inclusive of disabled people**

Everyone should be able to access employment, regardless of their disability. Despite having the right skills and experience many disabled people still face significant barriers accessing the workplace.

There remains a significant gap between the employment rate of disabled people and that of the rest of the population. Our research shows that 73% of disabled people in the UK have fallen out of work due to their disability or condition. We are calling for mandatory reporting of the number of disabled employees in large businesses to be introduced so that workplaces are fully inclusive and fair.

### **Ask your candidates:**

- What will you do to support disabled people into good quality work?



- How do you think employers could better support disabled people?
- Will you call for large businesses to report how many disabled people they employ, as they currently do on the gender pay gap?

#### **4. Breaking the link between disability and poverty**

Disability and poverty are closely linked, with disabled people often having lower earnings and higher costs of living due to disability related costs. 4.3 million disabled people are currently living in poverty and working-aged disabled people are much more likely to be in poverty than non-disabled people.

##### **Ask your candidates:**

- What steps will you take to make sure the welfare system helps disabled people live independently with dignity?
- How will you involve disabled people from our local area to make sure the welfare system works for them?

#### **5. Supporting disabled people across the globe**

There are more than one billion disabled people across the world, and they are often denied the most basic human rights and cut off from education, healthcare and employment. Through its international development programmes, the UK has championed the rights of disabled people across the world and has worked to make sure disabled people are not left behind. The next government should continue supporting disabled people across the globe.

##### **Ask your candidates:**

- What will you do to make sure disabled people across the world are supported through UK international aid?
- If you are elected, will you uphold and support the allocation of 0.7 per cent of GDP to international aid?
- Will you commit to supporting inclusive, high quality education for disabled people across the world?

Thank you for supporting our campaigning work and good luck with meeting your candidates or attending a hustings event.

##### **Contact us:**

For further information, or to let us know how you get on, please email [campaigns@leonardcheshire.org](mailto:campaigns@leonardcheshire.org)