



supporting each other



confident

connected

contributing

Manifesto for

Equal Participation

GDA

Glasgow Disability Alliance

Confident, Connected, Contributing

Some statistics: how reality affects rights

- Over **50% of welfare reforms** fall on the shoulders of disabled people
- Of jobseekers **sanctioned** in Scotland between 2011 and 2014, **over 25% were disabled people** (higher in Glasgow)...
- Community Care Charges bring in only 3% of Social care budgets – but, while many disabled people live in poverty, **we can still be charged up to 100% of our income** (after housing costs) – as much as £600 per week in some areas of Scotland – **for the essential support we need to live.**
- Young disabled people are up to **3 times more likely** than their non-disabled peers not to be in education, employment or training.
- Disabled people are more than **twice as likely as non-disabled people** to have no qualifications – 26% compared to 10%.
- **Less than half** of working age disabled people are in employment – **compared to 80% of non-disabled people.**
- **Only 6%** of formal volunteers in the UK are disabled, **compared to 20%** of the population at large.
- **Social isolation** causes long-term **damage** to physical and mental health – **social connections build resilience, help us recover from illness, and help us live longer healthier lives.** (Kings Fund 2013)

“Sanctions have introduced a culture of fear. Sometimes I feel they need to issue a DWP caution when you enter the job centre “anything you say can and will be used against you”.”

“I can’t afford the care charges – so I go without.” James

“Social aspect of GDA has enabled me to come to terms with illness and access sound information and make friends.”

“On a personal level, I feel truly lucky that I ‘found’ GDA – I am no longer in a dark place, I laugh, I feel whole again. I have met new friends. My next step will be to find a funded PhD I couldn't have said that a couple years ago.”

- Public services can become **more efficient and effective by working together with people and communities** – energising and empowering communities – building their capacity and resilience. (Christie 2011)

Around 1 in 4 Glaswegians - that's 150,000 of us - are disabled or have a long term health condition.

We are the biggest disabled population in Scotland. That's just one of the reasons why **over 3,000** of us have united to form a community of peer support and connections...

We are...

GDA

Glasgow Disability Alliance

Confident, Connected, Contributing

Glasgow Disability Alliance plays a huge part in helping Glasgow's disabled communities thrive through programmes of learning, development and peer support.

Disabled people across the city are determined to play our vital part in making Glasgow the best city in Scotland to live, participate, work, innovate and support each other. By taking part, we can fulfil our potential and make our contributions to Glasgow and Scotland.

Glasgow's Independent Living Strategy came about through disabled Glaswegians speaking out and being heard with support from Glasgow City Council, Scottish Government and Big Lottery.

Disabled people are working with others to help make a fairer Glasgow as well as contributing to the Scottish Government's vision for a fairer and healthier Scotland.

For disabled people to have the same opportunities to learn, work and be part of our communities, this often means doing things differently.

Barriers can often exclude us. Such as:



- Barriers to employment, volunteering, or accessing benefits.
- Physical barriers like inaccessible buildings, transport and stairs
- Social barriers like negative attitudes, low expectations, and social isolation

Access, support and reducing barriers means the difference between:

"being a prisoner in my home, staring at four walls..."

"being a healthy, active member of my community"

This year's Scottish election is an opportunity we all must seize to help shape a fairer Scotland...

...a thriving Scotland where disabled people's rights become reality...



"Transport and personal assistance – that's what allows me to be part of society, part of Scotland."
Idrees (24) GDA member

...where **equal opportunities** to be empowered and participate in our own lives and communities **are brought within our reach**, with the support we need guaranteed...

Support...

...to participate in decisions that affect us

Support...

...to participate in our own lives, families and communities

Support...

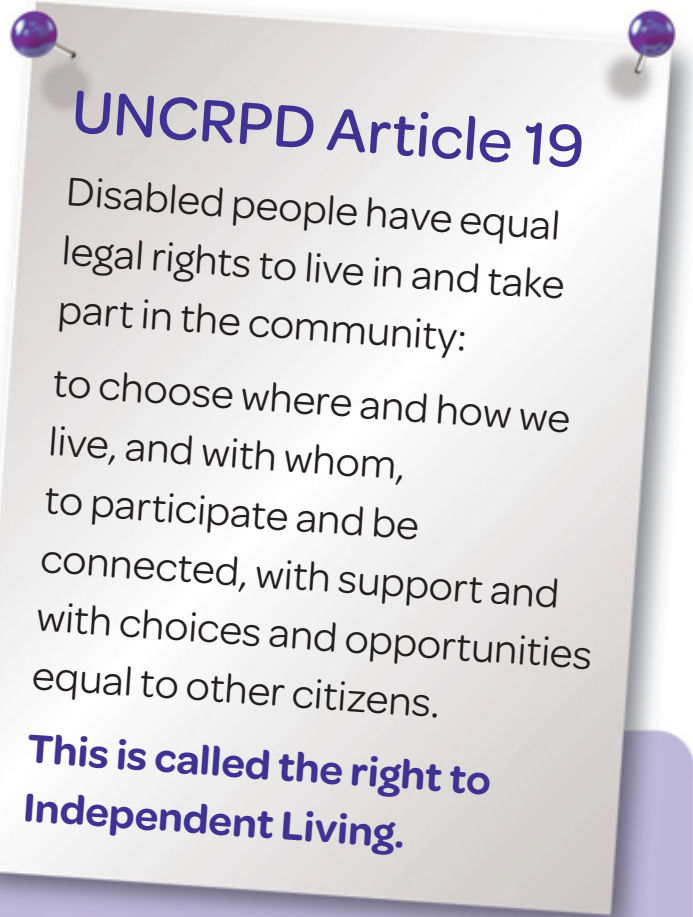
...to participate in learning, volunteering, work and public life

Support...

...to participate in communities of peer support

We have the talents, the people power and the rights to play an active and equal part in a flourishing Glasgow and a stronger Scotland.

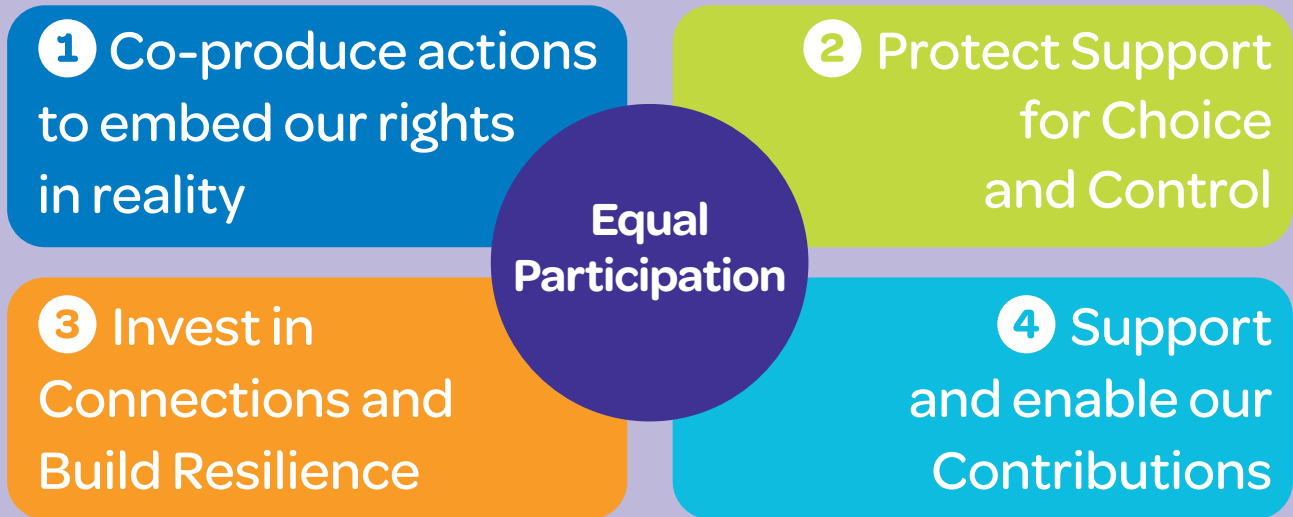
Like anyone, we need support, choices and connections to unlock our potential.



This Manifesto...

...maps out what needs to happen so disabled people can make our full and equal contribution to a thriving Scotland.

For a fairer Scotland, disabled people need Equal Participation.
This means we need to:



We are calling on MSP candidates to commit to delivering our 4 asks for Equal Participation.

These are the key, most pressing issues for over 3,000 GDA members, and disabled people more widely, at this time.

These are the immediate actions we need to take to progress towards a fairer, more equal Scotland.

1 Co-produce actions to embed our rights in reality



The Scottish Government is putting into action the ‘**UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities**’ (UNCRPD). Their aims for disabled people’s Human Rights in Scotland are **equal and inclusive access to:**

- Environment, transport, housing; Healthcare and support for independent living
- Education, paid employment, an appropriate income and support; and justice.

At the same time, **Scotland’s New Welfare Powers** are a chance to reshape the way Scotland invests in support for those who need it. Our new system is to be founded on the principles of **Dignity, Respect and Equality**.

We are dedicated to working with MSPs and all agencies, to help make these aspirations a reality for disabled people in a fairer Scotland.

“When you’re treated like a benefit scrounger, it undermines confidence and erodes self esteem. We have the right to be treated with dignity and respect – I want to contribute and be part of my community!”

Chris 52, GDA member

Actions...

...to make our Rights a reality

Work with DPOs to coproduce:

- **the new social security bill** – our voices, expertise and lived experience will help ensure that dignity, respect and equality are embedded in the reality of systems, processes and behaviours.
- a fair and progressive tax system to reduce inequality and poverty – including **scrapping Community Care Charges** (a tax on essential support, that only disabled people have to pay!)
- **A public awareness campaign to emphasise the positive contributions** disabled people can and do make, and to tackle negative attitudes that so often exclude us from participating equally and claiming our rights.



2 Protect Support for Choice and Control

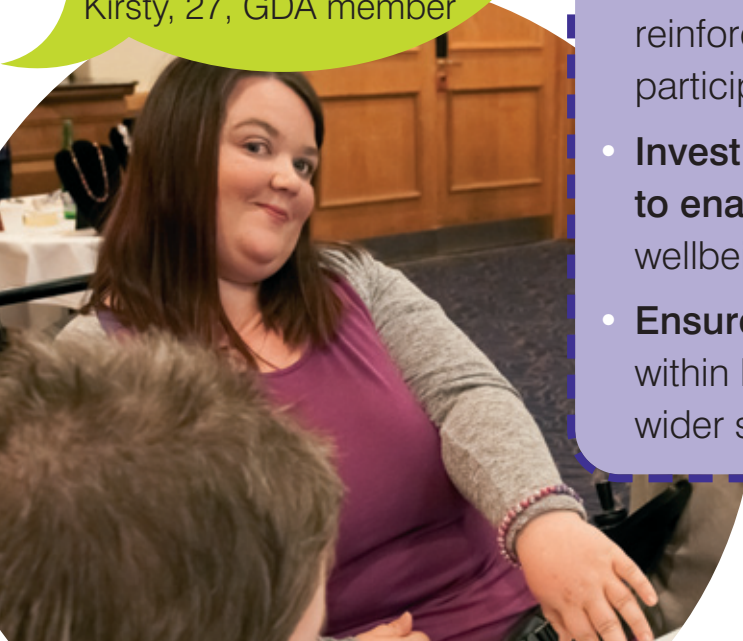
Scotland is bringing together health and social care services, to improve support for a fairer, healthier and more resilient Scotland – and to get the most out of all our nation’s resources.

Disabled people have a crucial role to play **by contributing our experiences, voices and expertise.**

Welfare cuts have been compounded by cuts to social care support, increasing poverty and isolation, and undermining progress towards disabled people’s rights and equal participation.

Disabled people and our communities need **support to participate**, to achieve our aspirations, and shape the services we rely on.

“Having choice and control over my support has given me confidence to do things I never thought I could – I’m working now and I graduated last year!”
Kirsty, 27, GDA member



The Self Directed Support (Scotland) Act 2013 is crucial to disabled people’s participation and human rights – but for many, the support, choice and control it guaranteed still seem like a far-off dream.

This Act was founded on the same principles as our new Social Security System: **Dignity, Respect and Equality.**

We ask that these principles be upheld in the Integration of Health and Social Care. NHS resources are rightly protected: **Social Care must also be protected, adequately resourced and ring-fenced.** This includes community-based, low-level support: saving NHS money in the long run.

Actions...

...to protect support for Choice and Control

- **Protect Social Care budgets** by aligning them with a national agency – such as the New Social Security body, or the Independent Living Fund – reinforcing equality, human rights, and participation at the heart of social care.
- **Invest in low level community-based support, to enable prevention:** through improved health, wellbeing and more equal participation.
- **Ensure disabled people’s voices are heard** within Health and Social Care Integration and wider services.

Supporting each other



3 Invest in Social Connections and Build Resilience

The Scottish Parliament now has evidence that loneliness and Social Isolation have huge negative impacts on peoples' health and wellbeing (Social Isolation Report 2015). Their Report calls Social Isolation a public health issue, on a par with poverty and housing. They recommend that actions to tackle isolation should be built into local and national strategies such as health and social care planning – and that support should go to projects which tackle isolation at the early stages, through building connections and enabling people to take control of their own lives.

Relationships and social connections improve health; help people cope with change and crisis; and build active communities (GCPH, 2015)



"I was in the hospital and my friends from the GDA came to visit... it makes you want to get better quicker, knowing you're part of something and people are missing you..."
Lilian, 67, GDA member

All of this is echoed by disabled people including GDA members, who also contributed to the Scottish Parliament Report.

Actions...

...to invest in Social Connections and Build Resilience

Invest in communities of interest as well as place. These build our capacity to support ourselves and each other. Invest in **community-run organisations** – including disabled people-led organisations (DPOs) which build self advocacy, voices and vital connections and opportunities. This increases our confidence and ability to cope and boosts resilience.



"If you've been out and had a nice time with other people, then you can face the night on your own."
Anne, 58, GDA member



4 Support and enable our Contributions...

...to our families, communities, our economy and wider public life.

Disabled people are an underused asset – doors to work, education and volunteering are too often closed to us (or up a flight of steps!).

We want to work, contribute, develop our skills and put them to use, playing an active part in our own lives, communities and wider society. GDA members can and do contribute, volunteering their skills, time and expertise: formal volunteering eg at Citizens Advice, supporting others, running our own clubs, making Glasgow proud at the commonwealth games; improving our local areas, services and communities, as advisors, members of working groups, or running our own clubs. Through GDA, disabled people are also empowered to offer friendship and support to each other.

The many barriers to learning, volunteering and paid work include: employers' attitudes, a cycle of low expectation and low aspirations, benefits sanctions and inaccessible employability programmes.

Through GDA, over 1,000 disabled people have participated in advising on Glasgow's strategic plan for health and social care integration, and the Scottish Government's strategies for a fairer and healthier Scotland.

GDA members are living proof that confident, connected people thrive and contribute... with the right support!

"When the first GDA taxi arrived I was too scared to get in it – I couldn't leave the house. I sent it away. Now my confidence has grown so much, I'm volunteering at the Marie Curie hospice doing Reiki, and making a real difference."
 Sarah, 54, GDA member

Actions...

...to support our vital Contributions

- Reform of employability support to include training, volunteering and employment, with **support and accessible pathways**. Invest in supporting those furthest from the labour market to recognise and fulfil their own potential.
- Invest in **lifelong learning and capacity building**, to enable disabled people to contribute through peer support, social connections, and involvement in shaping policy, services and decision-making. Support all contributions – not just paid employment.





"GDA gives a voice to the voiceless."



"It provides a platform to share the realities of our lives."

"It gives us skills, confidence and friendships which sustain us."

"It changes lives by providing access and a sense of purpose."



"We're supported to make a contribution which is important because disabled people want to contribute and be part of our communities."

"Through GDA we find out about our rights and opportunities."



"Through GDA we belong - we're part of something - and we want to belong in the wider world too."





"GDA recognises disabled people are assets because GDA are disabled people."

"Being a Purple Poncho Player is really empowering – getting out the message of what disabled people face every day." Kirsty 2016



GDA provides access including taxis and PAs which means I can take part"

"After doing courses with GDA I have achieved so much in believing in my self-worth as a valued member in my community."



"It gives you confidence and strength to know you're not on your own dealing with these difficulties; it strengthens your mental health."



Cut the red tape, not the life line: support disabled people and our organisations to contribute to a better Scotland for all!"

GDA 2016 Manifesto for Equal Participation

We are asking all MSP candidates to tell us how they will work with disabled people to:

1 Co-produce actions to embed our rights in reality

2 Protect Support for Choice and Control

3 Invest in Connections and Build Resilience

4 Support and enable our Contributions

Equal Participation

GDA

Glasgow Disability Alliance

Confident, Connected, Contributing

Suite 301 | The White Studios
Building 4 | Templeton Business Centre
Templeton Court | Glasgow G40 1DA
Tel: **0141 556 7103**

Email: info@gdaonline.co.uk

www.gdaonline.co.uk



Glasgow Disability Alliance



@gda__online



Glasgow Disability Alliance is a registered Scottish Charity number: SC034247
Private Limited Company number: SC248467