**WRITTEN STATEMENT**

**BY**

**THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

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| **TITLE**  | **International Day of Disabled People 2024** |
| **DATE**  | **03 December 2024** |
| **BY** | **Jane Hutt MS, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip** |

Today, we celebrate the achievements and leadership of disabled people across Wales and globally. Since the UN first recognised this day in 1992, December 3rd has been a powerful moment to highlight the contributions of disabled communities worldwide.

This year’s theme – ‘*Amplifying the leadership of disabled people for an inclusive and sustainable future’* underscores a critical message - disability inclusion is not just about social justice – it enriches our entire society.

As co-chair with Professor Debbie Foster of the Disability Rights Taskforce, I’ve witnessed firsthand how disabled people are not just participants, but leaders driving meaningful change.

Our collaborative approach has placed those with lived experience at the forefront of policy making.

In early Spring 2025, we will launch a comprehensive action plan on Disability, co-produced with disabled people. The plan will be based on the work of ten working groups:

* Embedding and Understanding the Social Model of Disability
* Access to Services (including Communications and Technology)
* Independent Living: Social Care
* Employment and Income
* Travel
* Independent Living: Health
* Children and Young People
* Affordable and Accessible Housing
* Access to Justice
* Wellbeing

This plan recognises BSL as a linguistic right and commits to breaking down barriers. On 21st November, I issued a [written statement](https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-british-sign-language-bsl-policy-update) on BSL policy development.

We are taking concrete steps to transform our approach to disability. Disability Wales will deliver specialised training on the social model of disability to Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers. Our cross-Government commitment is to challenge stereotypes, remove barriers, and ensure full participation for all.

The Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to publish guidance to support political parties to develop and publish Diversity and Inclusion Strategies for all Welsh elections, and to publish information about the diversity of Senedd candidates. This guidance is part of a wider package of reforms to make the Senedd fit for the 21st century and importantly to make democracy in Wales more representative and diverse, both at a local and Senedd level. I was pleased to launch the consultation on the draft guidance on 12 November and we are inviting thoughts on the draft until 7 January. I was also pleased to attend the Access to Politics Grassroots Network, funded by the Welsh Government.

A Legislative Options Working Group, drawn from members of the Human Rights Advisory Group, is advising the Welsh Government on the next steps to progress the incorporation of the UNCRDP. This independent group are testing an approach to analysing treaty articles on a right-by-right basis to ascertain what can be achieved through Welsh legislation. The work is novel and complex and requires careful analysis. The Group will report progress to the Human Rights Advisory Group in due course.

As we mark this day, our message is clear: Wales is committed to creating a society that truly values and empowers every individual, regardless of impairments.

Thank you to everyone involved in this work for your continued support.