

Report From Disabled Members Group

Jamie Szymkowiak, Co-Convener

It has been a privilege to serve as the Disabled Members Group's first NEC representative. In what has been a challenging year for many disabled people across Scotland, I can say with confidence that the SNP Disabled Members Group continues to be the most active and influential group of its kind in Scottish politics.

Disabled members have played a key role in our recent election and by-election victories. In the last year, we've been instrumental in ensuring Scotland's Deaf community can access daily COVID briefings and helped to shape policies that will reduce the disability employment gap and lead to more support for adults with Autism Conditions in the workplace.

Being connected with disabled members during lockdown was an essential part of our Group's strategy – and that's why we arranged a number of online events earlier this year, some of which were in partnership with the Equalities Forum. These included:

- Live Q&A with Marion Fellows MP
- An Evening with Christina McKelvie MSP
- Dismantling Imposter Syndrome with Shona Robison MSP and others
- Exploring Equality Mechanisms with Humza Yousaf MSP, Ruth Maguire MSP and others

Although we didn't secure backing for All-Disabled Shortlists in the recent selection contests, the Disabled Members Group was able to ensure disabled candidates could access additional support. Disabled members were prioritised in the candidate assessment process and we have more disabled people within the structures of our party than ever before. Nevertheless, we can and must do more.

In closing, I would like to thank all members and elected representatives who have sought to work collaboratively with the Disabled Members Group. In doing so, we demonstrate to the public that we are an inclusive movement. In the year ahead, disabled members eagerly look forward to playing our part in winning the upcoming election that sets us on the road to independence.

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Contact

Scottish National Party
 Gordon Lamb House
 3 Jackson's Entry
 Edinburgh,
 Scotland
 EH8 8PJ

tel: **0800 633 5432**

email: **info@snp.org**

Promoted by Peter Murrell on behalf of the Scottish National Party, both at Gordon Lamb House, 3 Jackson's Entry, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH8 8PJ



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