



Government
Equalities Office

Helping disabled people to stand in an election

Report about the EnAble Fund



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read

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In this easy read document, difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.



Some words are [blue and underlined](#). These are links which will go to another website which has more information.

Introduction



The Government Equalities Office has been looking into how well the **Enable Fund** has worked.



The **Enable Fund** is money that was made available to disabled people, to support them to stand in an election.



We have talked to people who received money from the fund about what they thought.



We have also talked to the people who were running the fund.



This report explains what people said.

The Enable Fund



The Enable Fund started in December 2018 and closed on 31st March 2020.



It was available to disabled people standing in the 2019 English local council elections and the 2020 Police and Crime Commissioner elections.



The fund was run by Disability Rights UK (DRUK) working with the Local Government Association (LGA).



You could apply for money to help you pay for any extra costs you had because of your disability.



You could apply for money from the Enable Fund to pay for things like:

- a sign language interpreter
- some equipment you need because of your disability
- a personal assistant to help you with certain things
- taxi fares where there wasn't any other suitable transport.



You could not use this fund for:

- day to day campaigning
- paying a deposit to stand in an election.



Before applying for money from the fund, disabled people were expected to use support that was already available first, like:



- bus passes



- computer programmes that help disabled people to work.



The money

The Enable Fund was £250,000 in total.



It cost £83,000 to manage the fund.



£35,000 was available to support disabled people.



But in the end only £20,000 was actually paid out.

How it worked

Applying for the money

There were 4 stages to apply for money from the Enable Fund:



1. You filled in an application form and sent it to DRUK.



2. You had an interview with DRUK by telephone or an online video call.



3. An independent group of disabled people decided if you should get the money.



4. The decision was checked by the LGA.

Money given



46 people applied for money from the Enable Fund.



10 people were part of the Conservative party.



22 were part of the Labour party.



8 were Liberal Democrats.



1 was part of the Green Party.



5 were independent or in other parties.



Of these 46 people, 41 went through all the stages of the application and we said they could have the money they wanted.

Of these 41 applications:



- 8 were for up to £299



- 7 were for between £300 and £499



- 11 were for between £500 and £699

- 3 were for between £700 and £999

- 4 were for between £1,000 and £1,499

- 6 were for between £1,500 and £1,999



- 2 were for more than £2000.

What people said



We asked the people who applied for funding to tell us what they thought in a survey.

Half of those people replied.

People said that they used the money for:



- support to post and give out campaign information - 17 people



- a personal assistant - 8 people



- transport - 2 people



- equipment or computer programmes - 2 people



- a banner or a stall - 2 people.

What we asked



Were you happy with the fund?

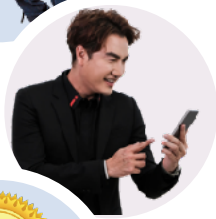
Nearly everyone was very happy with the Enable Fund.

Only a few were unhappy.

How did you hear about the fund?

People heard about the fund in different ways:

- Somebody told them about it.
- From the news or on social media, like Facebook or Twitter.
- Through a political party.
- From DRUK.
- By searching online.





Were you happy with the way you had to apply for the money?

Most people were happy with the way they had to apply for the money.



Some people thought it took too long for DRUK to make a decision.



Some people thought it was too hard to have to get 2 quotes for each thing they wanted to spend the money on.



Did your political party help?

About a quarter of people had some support from their political party.



Some had help applying for the money.



Others got no help from their political party, neither the disability group in the party, nor the person who speaks for disabled people in the party.



3 people said that their party provided money to help disabled people who want to stand for election.



Did the Enable Fund help?

About half of people said the Enable Fund helped a lot.



About 4 out of 10 people said it helped a little bit.



About 4 out of 10 people said they probably wouldn't have stood for election without help from the fund.



Most people thought that providing some funding was a very important way to get more disabled people standing for election.

DRUK and LGA



Together, DRUK and the LGA worked out a way that people could apply for the money.



They decided that the decisions about who gets the money should be made by disabled people and people from political parties.



Advertising the fund

DRUK told its members about the Enable Fund.



Some of the political parties told their members about the fund.



We think that more people would have applied for the money if:

- the fund had been advertised earlier
- there was some proper advertising about the fund all around the country.



Making the decision

DRUK understood a lot about what disabled people needed, but they didn't know as much about taking part in an election.



We decided to involve political parties because they understood what was needed to stand in an election.



We also needed the political parties to confirm that the disabled person had been chosen to stand for election.



Some people were not happy that political parties were involved because they might only give money to people in their party.

Providing invoices before you get the money



We said that people had to provide an invoice for the things they were spending the money on, before they could get the money from the fund.



People thought that this took too much time and was too hard.



Sometimes there was a problem when the quote they got originally was different to the amount on the final invoice.

