

## CAPABILITY SCOTLAND: 2005 VOTING INTENTIONS SURVEY

### TOPLINE RESULTS

These are the results from a survey of 200 disabled people and carers (40% response rate) conducted in March 2005.

The profile of people who responded is very similar to the survey conducted before the 2001 election: around 60% of respondents are women and the majority are aged 35-44 years old (28%) or 45-54 years old (27%). Two thirds of respondents are disabled and a third care for someone with a disability.

- 91% of respondents voted in the 2001 election and 95% plan to vote in the 2005 election.
- The main reasons for not voting are that 'politicians don't do anything for disabled people' or lack of interest in politics.
- Voting intentions show a sharp decline in the Labour vote, with the other three major parties holding their 2001 share.
- 29% of respondents were 'unsure' about how they would vote, suggesting that the campaigns in the run up to the election could be critical in persuading uncommitted voters. The proportion of uncommitted voters is similar to the 2001 survey

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Table: Voting patterns 1997-2005

	1997	2001	2005 (intended)
	%	%	%
Conservative	8	12	10
Labour	50	46	20
Liberal Democrat	12	15	13
SNP	24	15	15
Not sure	n/a	n/a	29

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- Health and state benefits are the two most important issues in helping disabled people and carers decide who to vote for. They are equally important to all age groups and to disabled people and carers.
- The issues that are of least importance are nuclear weapons and armed forces, suggesting that the key issues are those that are likely to have an immediate impact on the individual voter.

Table: Importance of issues in decision to vote

	Not important	Neither/ nor	Important	Don't know
	%	%	%	%
Health	0	2	95	4
State benefits	1	11	84	5
Poverty	1	9	79	10
Crime	0	12	78	10
Education	3	14	74	10
Jobs	6	16	69	9
Environmental issues	2	19	69	10
Taxes	6	16	67	11
Equality law	3	19	65	13
Transport	4	22	65	10
Nuclear weapons	13	31	41	16
Armed forces	16	35	34	14

- 70% of respondents plan to cast their vote in person and 24% plan to use a postal vote. There are significant differences between disabled people and carers in voting methods. 90% of carers plan to vote in person, compared with only 57% of disabled people.
- A third of disabled people plan to vote by post in 2005: this is a major change from the 2001 election in which only 16% of disabled people planned to have a postal vote.

- The main difficulties faced by disabled people in voting in person are walking to and getting inside the polling station. Once inside the polling station, disabled people were likely to say that casting their vote and getting help was relatively easy, although one in ten disabled people said it would be difficult to cast their vote.

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Table: Issues faced by disabled people in voting in person

Base = disabled people

	Difficult	Neither/ nor	Easy	Not stated
	%	%	%	%
Walking to the polling station	56	16	18	10
Getting inside the polling station	22	24	38	17
Using the polling booth	19	18	48	15
Being able to read information/hear	19	18	50	13
Getting a lift to and from the polling station	17	23	39	21
Folding the ballot paper/putting it in box	17	17	52	13
Getting to the actual polling booth	16	25	43	17
Casting your vote	10	15	61	14
Getting help on what to do	6	30	47	17

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- 30% of disabled voters thought that it would be easier for disabled people to vote in the 2005 election than in 2001, whilst 56% said that nothing had changed.
- 38% of respondents could not think of anything that the UK government had done to make life better for disabled people.
- The main government action that was perceived as making life better for disabled people was the Disability Discrimination Act and the related improvements to access to buildings and public spaces.
- 49% of respondents could not think of anything that the UK government had done to make life worse for disabled people.
- The main areas in which the government was seen as making things worse for disabled people was in not enforcing the DDA and changes to the Benefits system.
- Over a quarter (27%) of disabled people feel worse off under the current government, with a similar percentage feeling better off.

- 38% of respondents think that the Scottish Executive actually has the most influence on the way Scotland is run, but 70% think that it should have the most influence, suggesting strong support for an increase in the influence of the Executive.

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Table: Perceptions of bodies with influence on the way Scotland is run

	Has most influence	Should have most influence
	%	%
The Scottish Executive	38	70
The UK Government in Westminster	42	11
Local councils in Scotland	12	22
The European Union	9	2

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- 50% of respondents had had contact with their current MP, with carers more likely than disabled people to have had contact.

4<sup>th</sup> April 2005