

Inclusion BC survey: BC Green Party response

Issue 1: Access to Health Care for Adults

• 1.1: If elected, will you support the development, funding, and implementation of a health care strategy to adequately respond to the immediate and ongoing needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

Yes. We will begin by conducting an audit of Community Living BC (CLBC) to identify gaps in service delivery. We will implement all audit recommendations to ensure that CLBC provides excellent service that meets the needs of those giving and receiving care.

• 1.2: If elected, will you allocate annual targeted funds to strengthen the Health Services for Community Living program to ensure access to community nursing supports and to respond to ongoing population growth?

Yes. The BC Greens have committed to establishing an integrated community health centre in every riding in the province. We endorse the 'Dogwood Model', based on former Minister of Health Hon. Jane Philpott's Periwinkle Model. This focuses on ensuring everyone has a primary care home - a place where they belong, where they feel at home, where they will go for most of their healthcare needs, and where they have a regular provider - a family physician or nurse practitioner.

The BC Greens plan to roll out one Dogwood Health Centre in every riding in the province, ensuring the provision of 93 health centres in the first year. These will provide a baseline for growth, with good distribution across the province, upon which we can build.

The Dogwood Model provides several advantages for both practitioners and patients; it has easy referral models, so patients can receive care from the expert that best meets their need, be it a physiotherapist or a dietician. It places the administrative burden on the administrative professionals, rather than the health staff, ensuring they can focus their energies on healthcare, and providing the benefits of being a staff member - including health benefits and paid vacation and parental leave.

To better support our nurses, the BC Greens will Reinststate the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer role to advocate for the nursing profession. We also plan to adopt and implement the "Nursing Retention Toolkit: Improving the Working Lives of Nurses in Canada."

• 1.3: If elected, will you establish an action plan with provincial targets to attract more medical specialists with expertise in health care related to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to all regions of the province?

Attracting medical professionals:

The BC Greens will strengthen and support the healthcare workforce through better planning, training, and regulation. We will require health authorities to collect and share data for workforce planning, ensuring alignment with educational institutes. We will also review loan forgiveness and paid practicums for all healthcare students to incentivize sufficient staffing and support training, and will work to remove barriers for externally-trained health professionals, making it easier for them to become registered in British Columbia.

Issue 2: Access to Health Care for Children and Youth

Questions:

- **2.1: If elected, will you support a targeted investment for the development of a pediatric health strategy that utilizes existing recommended guidelines to equitably respond to the health needs of children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities?**
- **2.2: If elected, will you support the alignment of policy and practice with the recommended guidelines to ensure continuity of health care as youth transition to adulthood, including a person and family-centred approach to the transition that allows the necessary time to connect to the adult model of health care?**

Yes. Improving continuity of care is something the BC Greens recognize must be prioritized in reforming the province's approach to health care. Our platform includes a policy to address the abrupt transition between pediatric and adult mental health care by ensuring seamless and effective connections to support services at all stages of life. We recognize that a similar approach can and should be applied to youth with disabilities transitioning from pediatric to adult care and are ready to support this initiative. We are also committed to ensuring all of our policies are guided by evidence and people with lived/living experience – we will work with all recommended guidelines in our approach to health policy.

- **2.3: If elected, will you commit to creating community-based care coordination and navigation support programs for families, including nurse navigators and health-based social workers, while also streamlining services into a system that is easier to navigate?**

[With regard to community-based care, please also refer to our answer for Question 1.2 concerning the 'Dogwood model.']

The BC Greens will work to streamline healthcare administration to improve service delivery and reduce inefficiencies. We will begin by reviewing the Health Authority model, with a focus on creating a single health authority for the province, along with the First Nations Health Authority, to address systemic racism and improve Indigenous life expectancy. We will prioritize reducing unnecessary bureaucracy for family physicians, including legislating to remove the requirement for doctors' notes for short-term illnesses. Finally, we will centralize referrals for surgeries and team-based models of non-surgical and pre-surgical care by introducing a single-entry model, reducing wait times and supporting patients more effectively.

Issue 3: Mental Health

Questions

- **3.1: If elected, will you support the development and funding of a mental health strategy that is inclusive, equitable, intersectional, robust, and culturally safe to respond to the mental health needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the**

lifespan; offering diverse and holistic options on a continuum of care and coordinated across systems?

• 3.2: If elected, will you commit to setting targeted funds in the provincial budget with accountability measures in place, to increase regional capacity to address the mental health needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by:

o Ensuring that mainstream mental health services (including Foundry) become inclusive of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

o Reducing wait times for specialized services, like the regional Developmental Disabilities Mental Health services, and enhancing their capacity to support youth during their transition to adulthood.

o Addressing the lack of professionals with expertise in intellectual and developmental disabilities and co-occurring mental health challenges by creating a strategy for training, recruiting, and attracting specialists across the continuum of care.

o Enhancing prevention and assessment, in alignment with the Re imagining Community Inclusion Roadmap, to adequately support people's mental health needs?

The BC Greens will address staffing shortages in the mental health sector by attracting and retaining skilled frontline mental health workers. We will implement recruitment and retention initiatives, similar to those used by municipalities for primary care practitioners, including rural living allowances, health and wellness benefits, and rental housing options to attract frontline mental health workers.

We will conduct a comprehensive review of the Mental Health Act to ensure it meets modern standards and addresses the needs of individuals with mental health challenges. We plan to undertake an All-Party review of the Mental Health Act and create a parliamentary working group that will oversee the implementation of the recommendations.

The BC Greens will work to strengthen regulation and oversight of mental health care to ensure high-quality, accountable services for British Columbians. We will create an Independent Office of the Mental Health Advocate – providing individual and systemic advocacy, aimed at improving mental health care systems in B.C.

We will commit to the full regulation of psychotherapy professions, including psychologists, counsellors, therapists, and social workers, to increase public protection, provide accountability, and legitimize these essential professions.

We will collaborate with experts, including physicians, clinical psychologists, and psychiatrists, as well as individuals with lived experiences, to develop evidence-based standards of care for all mental health and substance use treatment services in B.C.

We will ensure that any funding that goes to substance use treatment services comes with a requirement that the service provider give comprehensive data and robust reporting on outcomes.

The BC Greens will improve the continuity of care in the mental health system and provide comprehensive support for individuals with concurrent conditions. We will address the abrupt transition between pediatric and adult mental health care by ensuring seamless and effective connections to support services at all stages of life.

We will improve systems of care for individuals with co-occurring mental illness, substance use disorders, and brain injuries, ensuring they receive integrated and comprehensive treatment.

We will Increase community-based services for individuals with eating disorders and develop stepped-care models that prioritize autonomy and self-directed recovery, with inpatient care available when necessary.

The BC Greens will promote early intervention in mental health care through expanded access to services and increased public awareness. This plan provides for the inclusion of six visits to a mental health professional, such as a psychologist, under the Medical Services Plan (MSP), ensuring early access to mental health support for all British Columbians.

We will Build on existing anti-stigma campaigns by incorporating feedback from mental health experts, students, and people with lived experiences to promote understanding, respect, and care for people with mental health challenges.

The BC Greens will strengthen community-based mental health services to ensure comprehensive and accessible support for all individuals in need. To support this agenda, we will expand the number of community integration specialists by 50%, helping more people connect to a wide range of community-based supports and services to meet their needs. We will also work with a diverse range of community partners, including Arts and Culture, Indigenous, Health, and Education experts, to develop comprehensive arts-based and land-based therapy programs that promote healing and well-being.

Issue 4: Income Security and Housing for Adults

Questions

• 4.1: If elected, will you ensure key changes are made to the provincial Persons with Disabilities (PWD) program to help lift people out of poverty, including:

o Rates that guarantee a liveable income and are indexed to inflation, beginning at \$2,400 a month.

o Individualized Benefits (attached to the person, not the household).

o The allowance of combined and stackable provincial and federal benefits, without clawbacks.

o Increase the health supplement benefit to provide needed access to pharmaceuticals, vision care, and equipment to support disability related needs?

The BC Greens commit to raising social and disability assistance rates to above the poverty line, ensuring that all individuals receive adequate support for their needs. Here are the actions we intend to take:

- Raising social assistance rates to ensure that individuals can meet their basic living expenses and live above the poverty line.
- Increasing disability assistance rates to provide adequate support for individuals with disabilities, ensuring they can thrive in their communities.

We will increase assistance rates to the following:

Social Assistance

	Current	New
Single person	\$1,060	\$2,400
Person and a spouse and no children	\$1,650	\$3,450
Single parent with one child	\$1,405	\$2,900
Person and a spouse and one child	\$1,845	\$3,450

Disability Assistance

	Current	New
Single person	\$1,483.50	\$2,400
Person and a spouse with with PWD designation and no children	\$2,548.50	\$3,450
Single parent with one child	\$1,828.50	\$2,900
Person and a spouse with PWD designation and one child	\$2,268.50	\$3,450

The BC Greens will treat individuals on social and disability assistance with dignity and respect, while simplifying access to necessary support. This includes the following initiatives:

- Remove clawbacks, including the spousal cap, to ensure individuals receive the full support they need.
- Create low-barrier access to assistance, eliminating intrusive checks that discourage individuals from seeking help.
- Ensure a year of guaranteed assistance upon first receipt, allowing individuals to assess their needs without the burden of constant checks and reporting.
- Reduce regular reporting requirements after the first year to ease the administrative burden on recipients.
- Raise the food crisis grant from \$40 per month to \$200 per month to better support individuals facing food insecurity.

• 4.2: If elected, will you engage stakeholders to establish an inclusive definition of affordable housing?

Yes. We would welcome the opportunity for consultation with community stakeholders and others with experience, expertise and perspective on BC's housing situation.

• 4.3: If elected, will you take immediate action to work with the federal government to facilitate access to the Disability Tax Credit and the Canada Disability Benefit by establishing an application process that automatically approves people who have applied for and are eligible to receive provincial benefits?

Yes. We plan to work with the Health and SDPR Ministries, along with the Provincial Accessibility Committee, to evaluate changes to the PWD application process, reducing complexity and eliminating barriers for applicants. We will also ensure individuals with permanent disabilities do not need to repeatedly submit medical forms. Streamline the process by allowing a one-time submission of medical documentation for those with permanent diagnoses, reducing delays and frustration for applicants.

• 4.4: If elected, will you increase the supply and availability of housing options to meet existing and emerging needs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by

o Expanding the mix of housing options available across affordability thresholds.

o Addressing the current affordability gap within each municipality across B.C.

o Increasing the number of portable rental supplements targeted for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

The BC Greens believe housing is a basic human right, a place where individuals, families and communities can live in security and dignity—not a tool for generating profit. It is time to take decisive action to ensure that homes are for people, not for profit. Everyone deserves a home they can afford.

Here are some of the policies we will be implementing to expand the mix of housing options, and addressing the affordability gap:

Strengthen tenant protections

- Prevent landlords from dramatically increasing rents after a tenancy ends by implementing vacancy control measures. This will ensure rent increases are reasonable and minimize displacement.
- Create province-wide minimum standards for tenant protection to safeguard renters from renovictions and other forms of displacement.
- Enhance the Residential Tenancy Branch to address tenant and landlord disputes more effectively, ensuring fair and timely resolutions.

- Increase funding to \$164 million annually for the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SHELTER) and Rental Assistance Program (RAP). Raise the rent ceilings, index them to inflation, and expand eligibility to better support low-income renters.

Scale Up Non-Market Housing

- Provide \$1.5 billion annually to construct 26,000 new units of non-market housing each year, with 3,000 units dedicated specifically for Indigenous Peoples.
- Implement province-wide upzoning initiatives to end exclusionary zoning for non-market housing.
- Support non-profits and housing cooperatives with upfront investment, grant capital and low-interest financing through government-backed construction loans and mortgage guarantees.
- Make existing public land available for non-profit housing development and acquire new public land to expand affordable housing opportunities. Recognize community land trusts as crucial for securing land for non-market development.
- Improve efficiency and transparency at BC Housing to ensure the build out of 26,000 units of non-market housing per year.

Protect Existing Affordable Housing Stock

- Increase funding to the Rental Protection Fund with a \$500 million re-capitalization to safeguard existing affordable rental units. Mandate transparency in fund allocation to guarantee equitable distribution.
- Allocate \$100 million annually to a Rental Maintenance Fund to preserve and maintain existing non-profit and co-op housing to prevent these units from falling into disrepair.
- Grant non-profit organizations the right of first refusal on the sale of rental apartment buildings, preventing the loss of affordable housing to private developers.

The BC Greens will:

Build whole communities

- Partner with municipalities to meet housing development targets and reward successful communities by sharing a portion of property transfer taxes.
- Provide \$650 million annually in infrastructure funding to municipalities.
- Develop housing specifically for families, students, essential workers, seniors, and people with disabilities to meet the diverse needs of communities.
- Safeguard existing green spaces and expand the urban tree canopy.
- Investigate the potential of land value capture as a funding source for infrastructure projects and community development.

Address the Commodification of Housing

- Introduce legislation to formally recognize housing as a fundamental human right, prioritizing it over market-driven interests.
- Implement regulations to curb the impact of short-term rentals on the availability of long-term affordable housing.
- Investigate the implementation of a property transfer tax on the transfer of properties to Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) or limited partnerships with REIT involvement.
- Advocate for federal legislation to ban the sale of residential units to REITs.
- Extend the Speculation and Vacancy Tax to all interested communities, with revenues directed towards non-market housing development.
- Create a single income-tested housing grant for renters and homeowners alike, merging the Home Owner Grant and Renter's Tax Credit for more equitable support.
- Apply a 2% tax on residential property values over \$3 million and double existing provincial property tax rates for homes valued above \$3 million, \$4 million, and \$7 million, ensuring high-value properties contribute more.

We recognize that using rental supplements as a means of providing support is in alignment with our vision and agenda, and would welcome the opportunity to work with stakeholders and advocates such as Inclusion BC in crafting effective and appropriate policies.

• 4.5: If elected, will you adopt an inclusive housing standard to respond to gaps in the current housing crisis with community-based targeted strategies? Specifically, for people in extreme housing need, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are at a higher risk of housing insecurity.

The BC Greens recognize that there is a wide spectrum of reasons for extreme housing need, and will work to take an intersectional approach. We welcome the involvement of advocacy groups like Inclusion BC in helping us to ensure that the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are included.

Issue 5: Income Security for Families

• 5.1: If elected, will you engage with stakeholders to create targeted poverty reduction measures specific to childhood disability that ensure policies and programs are in place and coordinated across all ministries to support the needs of families?

Yes. We have a range of policies that align with this request in place, and would welcome the opportunity to sit down with Inclusion BC to explore the possibilities together. Here is what we have at present:

We will cover mental health visits (psychologist, clinical counsellor) under MSP - so every resident will have access to 6 visits with a mental health professional per year.

We will add more counsellors, psychologists, and Education Assistants in K-12 schools across the province. This would help provide students with disabilities additional support while in schools.

We will also be working to ensure that Educational Assistants receive fair compensation and increased hours, ensuring they earn a living wage and have job security, and plan to pursue loan forgiveness programs for teachers, ECEs, and EAs.

We will improve home accessibility for people with disabilities to promote independent living and enhance safety in emergencies. We will increase the scope of the Home Improvement Assistance Program, which provides people with disabilities and landlords with rebates of up to \$20,000 per home for modifications that promote accessible, safe and independent living.

We will work with the Health and SDPR Ministries, along with the Provincial Accessibility Committee, to evaluate changes to the PWD application process, reducing complexity and eliminating barriers for applicants.

We will ensure individuals with permanent disabilities do not need to repeatedly submit medical forms. Streamline the process by allowing a one-time submission of medical documentation for those with permanent diagnoses, reducing delays and frustration for applicants.

Addressing cultural sensitivity (notably in the case of Indigenous families), we will provide families in kinship care with the same financial and social resources that foster families receive, addressing the insufficient financial support currently provided, recognizing the importance of familial and kinship care in child welfare.

• 5.2: If elected, will you ensure that through federal and provincial funds, families with children with disabilities have equitable access to inclusive child care supports in their community, including age-appropriate and well supported before and after school care, to reduce the barriers that parents/caregivers face to join the workforce?

The BC Greens have an extensive childcare policy, to ensure that all children can thrive. We welcome the opportunity to work with Inclusion BC to craft dedicated, actionable strategies to address the question of equitable access to appropriate child care supports for parents, guardians, and caregivers.

Some examples of our child care initiatives include:

Improve access to affordable childcare for children under 5.

- Allocate at least \$250 million to expand childcare space creation for children and infants under 5.
- Provide ECE and childcare centres with the necessary supports to continue operations and create more spaces to meet demand.
- Ensure the province remains on track to deliver \$10/day childcare for all, making early childhood education affordable for all families.

- Provide \$100 million in new funding to create a capital program within the Ministry of Education for renovations and additions to schools to support ECE space creation.

Ensure all families have access to before- and after-school care.

- Expand the availability of dedicated school-age care spaces across BC schools to meet the needs of working families.
- Increase before and after school program offerings to provide flexible childcare solutions for families.

• 5.3: *Financial supports are required to ensure needs are met regarding access to high-quality, equitable, and accessible health care, housing, transportation, and disability-related services. If elected, will you ensure these measures toward income security for families are put in place and are stackable with other benefits, without clawbacks?*

Yes. The policies we have addressed already in our responses to these survey questions with regard to health care and housing are broadly available and intended to be integrated into a comprehensive approach to governance that avoids clawbacks. This includes our policies of free public transit for all, and increasing the availability of HandyDART services.

Issue 6: Supports and Services for Children and Youth

Questions

• 6.1: Within your first year of being elected, will you commit to increasing Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) program funds to:

o Immediately support children and youth with disabilities and their families.

o Address gaps and barriers that families are experiencing within the current service framework through a more equitable distribution of resources?

• 6.2: If elected, will you ensure that the data collected through community engagements during 2023 & 2024 is acted upon in the development and implementation of the new CYSN framework?

• 6.3: If elected, will you work across party interests to ensure the new CYSN framework is adequately funded on an ongoing basis to respond to the needs of communities and deliver services that are accessible, inclusive, culturally safe and focused on addressing the needs of children and youth with disabilities and their families to realize this vision:

Children and youth with disabilities from 0 to 25 years and their families have access to timely, equitable and universal access in their communities to supports and services, including assessments, intervention therapies, family respite, mental health supports, medical and in-home supports, inclusive child care, and inclusive age-appropriate before- and after school care programs.

• 6.4: If elected, will you collaborate with other ministries to create a workforce strategy to increase the pool of professionals providing supports and services for children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families across the province?

• 6.5: If elected, will you work with the office of the Attorney General to conclude the process to expand the mandate of the Representative for Children and Youth to include education, health, and mental health?

Working across party interests is a hallmark of the BC Green approach. In this election, and in our public record of involvement in governance, we have shown repeatedly that people and ideas matter more than partisan ideologies and party politics. This approach absolutely applies to exploring ways to support and appropriately expand the CYSN framework; including data collected through community engagements during 2023 & 2024 is characteristic of the approach we would take in looking for equitable and actionable responses to these issues.

With regard to the proposal to collaborate with other ministries to create a workforce strategy to increase the pool of professionals providing supports and services for children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, please consider our response to question 1.3 as a starting point that would be applicable to the needs of this community.

Addressing question 6.5: the answer is yes. We also intend to expand awareness and education campaigns in elementary, secondary and post-secondary institutions. These campaigns will focus on creating safer and more inclusive learning environments for students with disabilities and raising awareness about ableism and its harmful effects.