

People First (Scotland) Newsletter



Summer 2023



New Directors for Clackmannanshire



Gender-based violence Conference



Glasgow elections



Filming in Edinburgh

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We have tried to make our Newsletter accessible. If there is anything that is not clear then please ask a People First worker to explain.

Equally Safe



Members of the Equally Safe Group and Director Michelle Steel presented at Scotland's first Learning Disability and Gender-Based Violence Conference in March.

Michelle delivered a presentation alongside Charlie McMillan about the Scottish Government's Gender Based Violence and Learning Disability Steering group, which they co-chair.



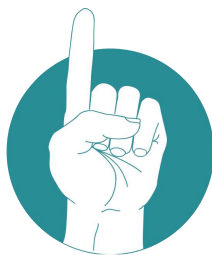
The Equally Safe Group presented a speech and two workshops, which had the voices of many members from People First (Scotland).

The strong message we delivered was that change needs to happen now.



Police Scotland, Scottish Government, the National Advisory Council for Women and Girls and workers from Health and Social Care services attended the conference.

It was brilliant to have so many women with learning disabilities on stage being heard. Too many times people speak for us, thinking we can't do it. We can and we do it our way .



Collective Action in People First (3)

For members People First can be the only place where we feel we have a real voice.

Our organisation is independent and we run it, both those things are so important to us.

We have the space and support to be heard freely here.

We choose how we spend our time, what the workers we employ support us with and which things are the top priorities for our resources.

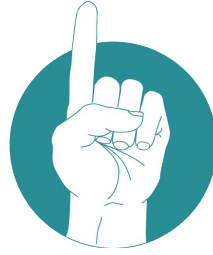
We see the respect given to other organisations. We observe their influence and visibility. We are not valued the same way.

Lots of places and organisations still do not let people talk for themselves or they tell them what to say. They set the agenda. That does not happen for us when we lead.

We do not ask individual members to speak publicly in person about their own experiences. But, all members know People First is a safe, respectful and confidential place to share anything they choose to.



Advocacy (Scotland)



Representative members might deliver information that applies to them **BUT** it is the collective message, agreed and experienced by many that we share. This often includes traumatic or abusive experiences.

There is strength in numbers. We stick by our principles. We share our long standing and developing key messages;



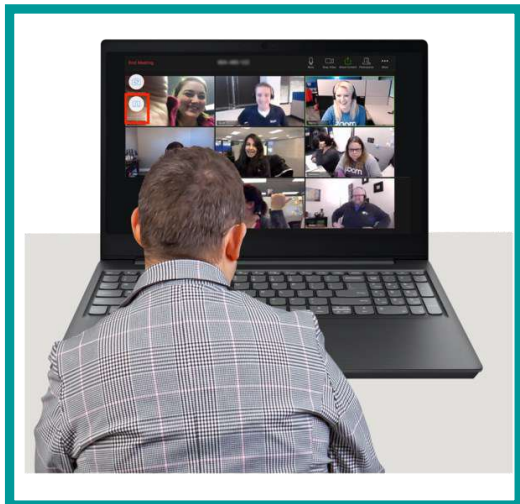
- Even when the same barriers are still in place.
- Even when the same approach that does not work is used.
- Even when we are asked to put up with getting less than works.

We keep telling you that we are human, we are the experts, but your actions and approach mean that we are still invisible and ignored. We expect things to change.



If you are listening and hear us, if the words spoken, written and repeated by you and colleagues are sincere then change can be significant. The change could be absolute; it could really transform our lives.

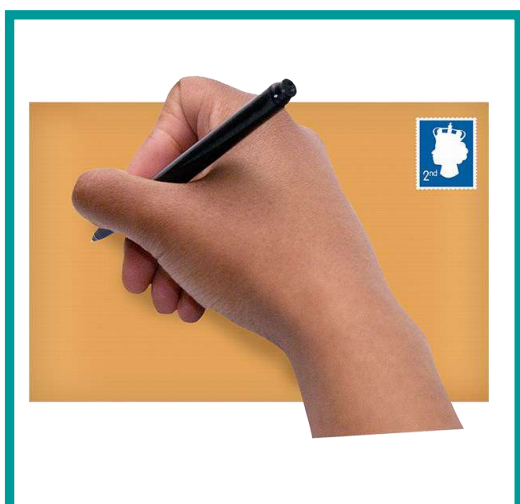
Law and Human Rights Group



The Law and Human Rights Group is still meeting once a month using the hybrid approach.

This means some of us come to the Edinburgh Office and some of us join the meeting online.

In the last Newsletter we told you that we had written a letter to Kevin Stewart who was the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care (it is now Maree Todd).



We told him our concerns about the recommendations made by the Independent Mental Health Law Review. We invited him to meet with us to talk about these issues.

In his response Mr Stewart said that he could not meet with us.

Instead members of the Law and Human Rights Group were invited to a 'listening exercise' with other learning disability organisations.

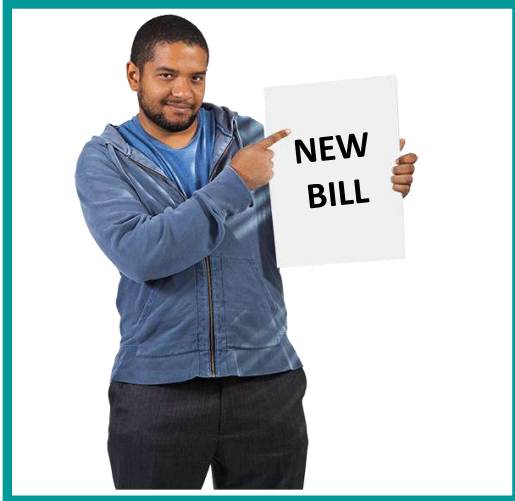


The group also met with a team of civil servants and said clearly that learning disability should come out of the Mental Health Act.

We will keep you updated about this work.

LDAN Bill

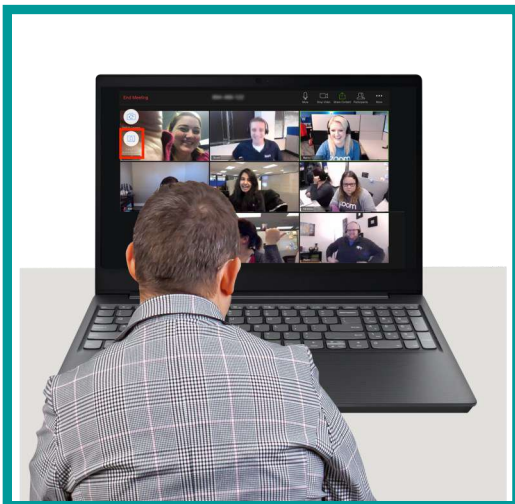
Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill



This update is about the development of the 'Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill'.

Scottish Government created a Lived Experience Panel, a Stakeholder Panel and Practitioner Panel.

Aspects of the process have not been accessible and Directors were not allowed to apply for the Experience Panel.



Maggie Wilson and David Scott now sit on the Stakeholder Panel. At the first meeting they talked about all the work People First have done and what we want to see in the new Bill.

We also shared 'The Case for a New Law' and 'Framework for Supported Decision Making' to offer further detail on what should be in the new Bill.



We will keep attending the panel meetings and sharing our key messages connected to the new Bill.

Members have also been creating a film about the new Bill which will set out what we want to see included. We will share the film once it is finished.

SOLD

Supporting Offenders with a Learning Disability



SOLD members visited Polmont Young Offenders Institution as part of Neurodiversity Celebration Week in March.

Polmont are keen to link people up with services and support they can engage with when they get out.



We talked to 4 groups of young offenders about SOLD, the work we do and the peer support we offer.

We heard that some of these young people have been on a 9 year waiting list to be seen by CAMHS.

CAMHS is the name for the NHS services that assess and treat young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.



They told us that often the only way to get support was to commit an offence and be jailed.

In prison there is some support on offer but there is nothing available on the outside.

We hope some of the young people will join SOLD after their release.

Supported Decision-Making



At the Cross Party Group for Learning Disability in March we gave a presentation about Supported Decision-Making.

Supported Decision-Making is where someone is supported to think about and make a decision. The support offered will depend on the type of decision and the needs of the person.



At the moment some people with a learning disability have their right to make decisions taken away from them through Guardianship.

People First has written a Framework for Supported Decision-Making which describes how it could work.



We have been campaigning about this for many years and we are now hearing other organisations speaking about this and recognising the work we have done.

It is great to see Supported Decision-Making being talked about more often.

We hope the Scottish Government is listening and recognises this. The new law should clearly set out and make provisions for funding a full system of Supported Decision-Making.

Clackmannanshire



Clackmannanshire members held Board elections in February. The event took place at Alloa Business Centre and it was a good turn out. Congratulations to Fraser Dawson and Katherine Gerrard were elected to sit on the Board.

Members also had a meeting with Clackmannanshire and Stirling public transport Service Delivery Officer at Sauchie resource centre. The meeting was to talk about challenges with public transport and how to improve



Glasgow

Glasgow elections took place on Wednesday 5th April at The Adelphi Centre. Glasgow members were voting for 3 Directors to represent them on the People First (Scotland) Board.

It was a good turn out and lots of us had not seen each other for a very long time.



The members who stood all gave great speeches that were very positive. It was a great atmosphere and provided an opportunity for lots of us to connect.

Congratulations to Rosie Smith, Michelle Steel and Ethel Gemmel who were elected as the Directors for Glasgow.

Fife



In March 2023 People First held an event in the Victoria Hotel in Kirkcaldy, Fife. This was for new and existing members of People First.

Over 25 people came together, some through digital connection. We named our event 'Our Lives, Our Rights'.

Members of People First from Fife planned the whole day. We looked together at topics that we should focus on.



Members also prepared the questions and created the workshops.

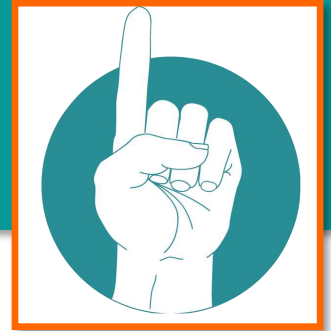
It was a chance to talk about the Laws in Scotland that affect our lives. To learn about our rights. A chance to talk about Mental Health and to hear about what advocacy is.



The event was a great success because so many people were keen to talk about Collective Advocacy.

Our discussions will inform the Advocacy Strategy in Fife and we look forward to more events like this in the future.

Contact Information



If you would like more information about People First groups then please contact the National Office in Edinburgh. You can find the contact details below.

YOU CAN STILL SEND MAIL TO THE OFFICE , WE WILL RECEIVE IT.



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