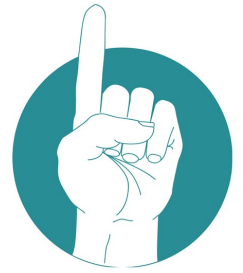


People First (Scotland) Newsletter



Winter 2023



Fraser Haldane & Maree Todd MSP



Board meeting in Perth



Keith Lynch & Sir Robert Martin at the UN

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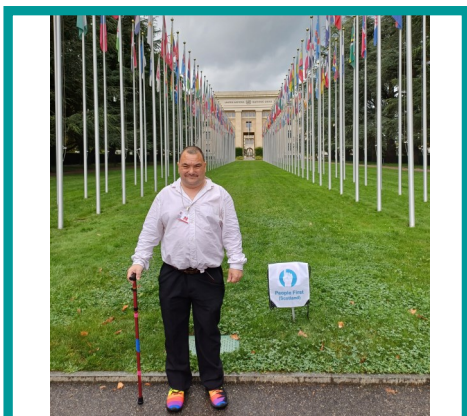
We have tried to make our Newsletter accessible. If there is anything that is not clear then please ask a People First worker to explain.

United Nations



In September, Keith Lynch attended the United Nations in Geneva representing People First (Scotland) representing People First (Scotland) as part of a group of UK Disabled People's Organisation.

Keith was there to give evidence about the progress or lack of progress by the UK and Scottish Government to improve the Human Rights of disabled people.



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities describes the rights that disabled people should have.

The rights in the CRPD include Health, Education, Employment, Access to Justice, Accessibility, Independent living and equality before the law.



Keith told the UN Committee that these rights are not met and day to day dignity and respect is denied to learning disabled citizens.

Keith also met up with Sir Robert Martin who is the first person with a learning disability to sit on a UN committee.

People First met with Sir Robert back in 2018 when he was visiting Scotland

Board meeting in Perth



In September, Directors came together in Perth Concert Hall. 5 members who attended the ‘Support to Live a Life’ events last year also attended from Dundee, Inverness, Clackmannanshire and Midlothian.

Directors and members shared their thoughts on ‘What matters most to us’ and described the barriers and prejudice experienced by many people with a learning disability.



Maree Todd MSP, minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, attended. We shared our film about the new ‘Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill’ with Ms. Todd.

We spoke about the work of the Parents Group, Law and Human Rights Group and Hospital project.

We said that supported decision-making is the key to realising our human rights and empowering us to have control over our own life. Keith Lynch repeated this message when he sat on a panel with Ms. Todd at the National Care Service forum in October.

Ms. Todd wrote a letter to Keith thanking him for his input.



Parent's Group



In July, a member from the Parents Group delivered a presentation to Social Work Scotland to talk about the barriers that parents with learning disabilities face.

In September the group gave a presentation to the Independent Chair of the Child Protection Committees.

This was a good chance for the Group to make suggestions for change. For example:



The Parents Group said the Chairs should find out what accessible information about Child Protection is available in their area.

This should be made available to parents with learning disabilities.



In October the Parents Group delivered a presentation to Social Work Students at the University of Edinburgh.

Members said what social workers need to think about when working with parents with learning disabilities.

The group has further plans to deliver a presentation to the head of social work in Scottish Government.

Supporting Offenders wi



In September the Supporting Offenders with a Learning Disability network held its annual conference. This year was about Diversion from Prosecution.

Diversion from Prosecution means that prosecutors ask a local council to provide support to the accused person rather than sending them to Court.



Prosecutors are solicitors who try to prove in court that the accused person is guilty of committing a crime.

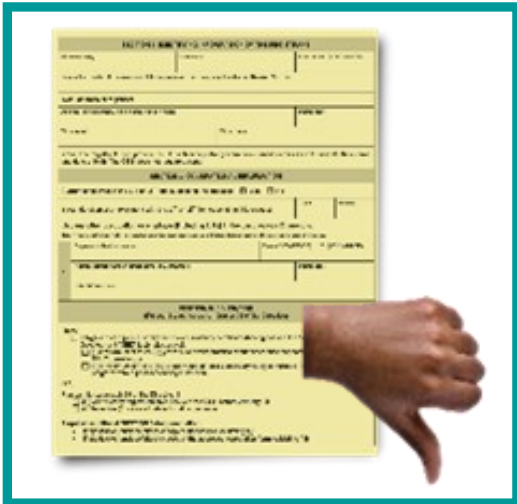
With Diversion from Prosecution the local council would help the person deal with the personal issues that led them to commit an offence.



But, SOLD is not aware of any person with a learning disability who committed a crime who was diverted.

We think that there are barriers to people with a learning disability being offered Diversion from Prosecution.

th a Learning Disability



Diversion from Prosecution is new and not well understood even by justice professionals.

We heard that sometimes prosecution services do not have all the information they need to decide if a person could be diverted.

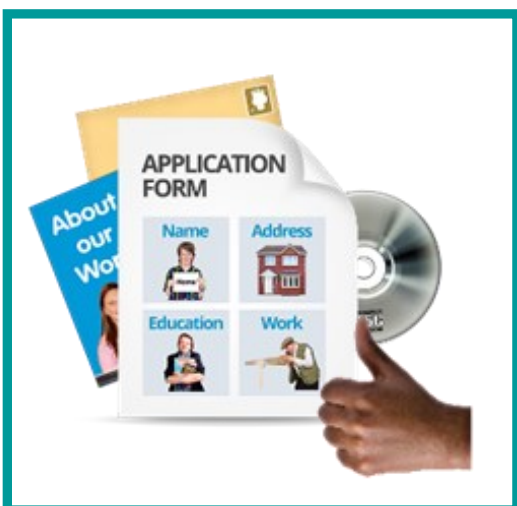
People who are offered Diversion from Prosecution are informed by letter.



We heard the letter is complicated to understand and is not in accessible or easy read format.

This puts people with a learning disability at a disadvantage because they can miss out on the offer.

Diversion from Prosecution has lots of benefits:



The person does not receive a criminal record.

People get the support they need which can help stop reoffending.

If support continues then it can have a positive impact on the person's life.

We will write a full report about the conference.

Law and Human Rights Group



The Group responded to the Scottish Government consultation on the Human Rights Bill for Scotland. Members from across the organisation gave their views.

We said that the idea of a Human Rights Bill is positive.

People with learning disabilities should get access to all their rights as they are written in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)



The consultation said that rights in the UNCRPD will not have the same status in law as other rights.

This means that public bodies would have to think about UNCRPD rights when making decisions and planning services.



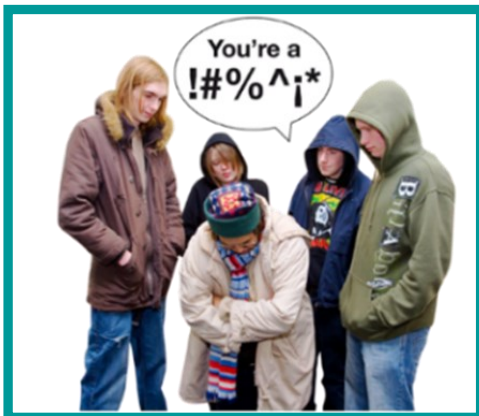
But public bodies would not have to show they meet those rights.

Members said that this is not good enough!

Rights for citizens with learning disabilities need to be strengthened urgently!

People First (Scotland) has signed a letter to the First Minister calling for the Bill to be strengthened.

Hate Crime update



During National Hate Crime Awareness Week in October, members of our national hate crime group attended the launch of the new hate crime film made by SCLD. It is called We Are More.

We contributed to the making of the film and our voice is strong in it. We gave a presentation at the launch event. We have posted the film on our Facebook page for everyone to see.



Edinburgh update

In September, Edinburgh members were back at Stockbridge Library for an information session with Police Scotland.

We talked about scams and doorstep crime and asked questions about how to better protect ourselves. It was a good discussion.



Some Edinburgh members attended a protest against the care charges outside Scottish Parliament, organised by The Assembly.

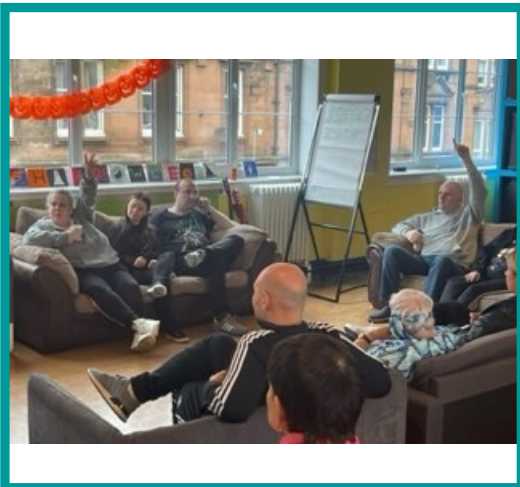
Members said that it was an important point to make; we should not have to pay for our right to be supported to live our lives as equal citizens.

Glasgow



Members of the Glasgow men's group took part in an NHS consultation which looked at the experiences of people with a learning disability, when they make appointments, and visit hospitals and other NHS services across the greater Glasgow and Clyde areas.

Members commented on the good and bad points of access to health services and made suggestions about how services can be improved.



South Lanarkshire

Members of the Hamilton group recently held an event in the local Universal Connections alongside a representative from Police Scotland.

At the event we talked about general safety both at home and in the community, as well as how to keep safe while using the internet and recognizing scam callers.



There was also a workshop where we talked about the effects of the misuse of illegal street drugs such as cannabis and cocaine.

Clackmannanshire



In August Clackmannanshire members held a 'Connect' event where we gathered to discuss our engagement work and projects. We also discussed the support and services we need in our local area.

Members also met with Forth Valley Dental Care team and provided advice on how best to support someone with a learning disability. We spoke about accessible information and communication.



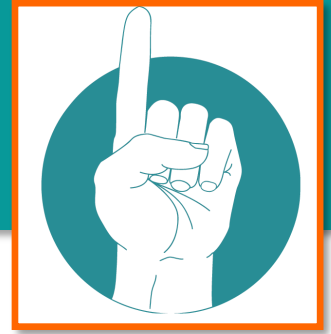
We organised a workshop with Forth valley Rape Crisis Centre to discuss consent in relationships. The workshop focused on consent in various aspects of life including, friendships, personal space, and sexual relationships.

Consent is being free to say yes or no to something and having your decision respected.



Members also invited Donald Balsillie, the Provost of Clackmannanshire, to meet with groups. We shared information about the work and projects going on relating to transport, housing, health and social care.

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.



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