

People First (Scotland)

Key Message on Parents with Learning Disabilities



People First (Scotland) works towards realisation and promotion of the human rights of citizens under the labels of Learning Disability or Intellectual Impairment.

People First (Scotland) is proudly member-led, it is controlled by the members, citizens who often experience life dictated by prejudice associated with those or other labels.

People First (Scotland) campaigns to establish and protect the same freedom, choice, dignity and control held by other citizens, across all of life.

PARENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES



Parents who have learning disabilities are at high risk of having their children removed from their care, often at birth.



We worry that we cannot make mistakes without serious consequences from the system.



Parents with learning disabilities are less likely to ask for help because of negative experiences with professionals.



It is common for parents to feel ignored when professionals do not explain what they mean or the decisions they make about our families.



Parents with a Learning Disability have difficulty accessing resources and services, especially digitally. Information is hard or impossible to understand with no support provided to understand it.



Because of prejudice towards people with a Learning Disability and a lack of specialist support, parents are assessed as unfit to parent without opportunities and support to learn.



What we are asking for:

- The same rights as other citizens to raise a family.
- A change in attitude from professionals who are involved in parenting assessments.
- Ongoing and flexible support tailored to the parent and their parenting and support needs.
- Accessible documents and information from social work departments and other statutory bodies and organisations, including schools.



What we are doing to make this happen:

- Share our expertise and collective experience to stakeholders to inform, educate, and campaign for change and to influence policy.
- Contribute to research about the experiences of parents with learning disabilities to improve practice and develop new models of support.
- Work with services to improve their accessibility and produce Easy Read resources for parents.



People First (Scotland) Key Messages clarify the organisation's stance and values.

All Key Messages reflect the 3 kinds of change we work towards;

1. Change in the way citizens with a learning disability see themselves.
2. Change in the way the world sees and thinks about citizens with a learning disability.
3. Change in the law and policy as it affects us as humans and citizens.

All Key Messages set out clearly what the organisation stands for as well as our expectations.

- **Everyone in People First (Scotland) has the right to access and have support to understand People First (Scotland)'s Key Messages.**
- **Support is in place for members and for workers to maintain and deliver the Key Messages.**
- Directors of People First (Scotland), as leaders, are supported to communicate and uphold the Key Messages of the organisation across all areas of their work.
- Directors, workers and members all hold power, influence and responsibility according to their role in the organisation.
- Directors and workers have a specific responsibility to proactively demonstrate the **Key Messages** within the organisation's activity, culture, values and ethics.
- People First (Scotland) works to highlight and challenge the barriers faced by people with a learning disability; our **Key Messages** demonstrate how we, and others, need to change in order to address these barriers.
- In order to ensure that the required change is long term and sustainable our action to address these barriers may be described in our reporting, monitoring and evaluation.
- Applications for and reporting on funding will, at times describe actions which support People First (Scotland)'s **Key Messages**.

People First (Scotland) **commit** to sustained action through visible leadership and our willingness to change:

- Visible leadership in People First (Scotland) takes a number of forms.
- Leadership is visible in People First (Scotland) governance structure (for example the Small Director Groups, Committees and the Board) as well as through representational roles held by members and supported by workers.
- Aspects of monitoring, evaluation and reporting will include detail of our willingness to change and our efforts towards People First (Scotland)'s **Key Messages**.

- Leadership within our management structure, team supervision and support and all team interaction also demonstrates our efforts towards People First (Scotland)'s **Key Messages**.

People First (Scotland) must look **critically and reflectively** at all we do and how we do it from end to end.

People First (Scotland), includes partnership working between members, groups, directors, committees, workers and partner organisations. All our partnership working is in support of, and works towards, People First (Scotland)'s **Key Messages**.

We will continue to create safe spaces, systems and times to talk, share experiences and learn from each other.

We will ensure our **Key Messages** are developed and informed by member voices, bringing in additional experts where necessary.

- People First (Scotland) groups and workers, in partnership will at times support the Small Director Groups (SDGs) and the Committees to develop accessible materials that clarify expectations on ways for directors, members and groups to demonstrate the **Key Messages**.
- The Staffing Committee will identify and resource team development to support workers as individual practitioners and as an entire team in their efforts to proactively demonstrate People First (Scotland)'s **Key Messages**.
- As trustees The Small Director Groups/Board and Committee members will review and, when necessary, update **Key Message** documents through feedback from within and out with the organisation.

People First (Scotland) will **communicate** our Key Messages consistently and ensure the conversation is two-way:

- Materials and messaging developed to share the **Key Messages** can be used by representatives of People First (Scotland) when presenting / training / interacting with stakeholders.
- When taking on new roles or joining new groups, the **Key Message** documents will be used to support the development and understanding of members, Directors and representatives.
- Stating, repeating and clarifying this message will support our efforts to communicate the People First (Scotland) **Key Messages** to members, workers and wider stakeholders.
- People First (Scotland) will listen, reflect and act on feedback that connects to our development, work and actions on the **Key Messages**.