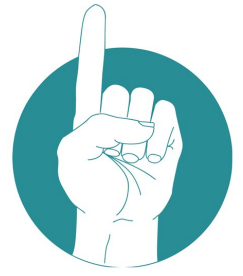
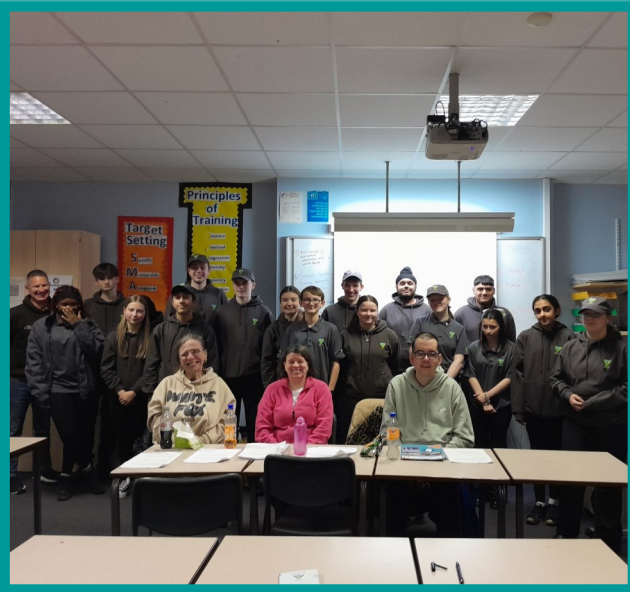


People First (Scotland) Newsletter



Spring 2025



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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.

Office Bearer Elections



Office Bearer Elections were held on 12th March. This is a democratic process where Directors vote for who they want to take on some of the biggest roles in the organisation.

The results were as follows:

Chairperson: Rosie Smith

Vice –Chairperson: Fraser Haldane

Treasurer: Steve Robertson

**Chair of the Staffing Committee:
Michelle Steele**

4 members of the Staffing Committee:

James McNab

Maggie Wilson

Jackie Campbell

Ivan Cohen

Billy Lindsay

The Law and Human



Last year, the Law and Human Rights Group responded to the consultation on proposals to change parts of the Adults with Incapacity Act (AWI Act).

The AWI Act is the law that can be used to put people with a learning disability under Guardianship. This means someone else has the legal right to make decisions for that person.



We campaign for an end to Guardianship and to establish a system of supported decision making where we are supported to make our own decisions.

We said the proposals did not go far enough because they did not propose establishing a full system of Supported Decision-Making.

We have requested to meet with Scottish Government to discuss next steps but they are not able to meet with us at this time.

They say they are looking at all the responses to the consultation.



Human Rights Group



Scottish Government are considering a consultation on changes to the Mental Health Act later this year. We have campaigned for years to remove learning disability from the definition of mental disorder.

A learning disability is not a mental disorder and we should never be detained in hospital on the basis of our disability. We will be meeting with Scottish Government to talk about how to make the consultation accessible and make sure that people with a learning disability can have input into the process.



We also recently responded to Scottish Government's Mainstreaming Equality Strategy. This is their plan to make sure that equality and human rights are across all of what local and national government do.



We said that it is really important to have a strategy but we are concerned that lack of progress on a Human Rights Bill and on laws that discriminate against us are barriers to achieving equality and human rights for people with a learning disability.

Supporting Offenders with a



Two SOLD members delivered training to the Justices of the Peace in February at the Judicial Institute for Scotland.

We go and speak to the Justices of the Peace two or three times a year. The training focused on “how to communicate better with people who have a learning disability”.

We used two case studies to help judges understand what a learning disability is.



This is informed by our own experience of the justice system.

We gave them lots of practical information to help identify when someone may have a learning disability and need extra support.

This is important because the person must be able to understand what is happening to them in court. Plain accessible English is what’s needed, not jargon.

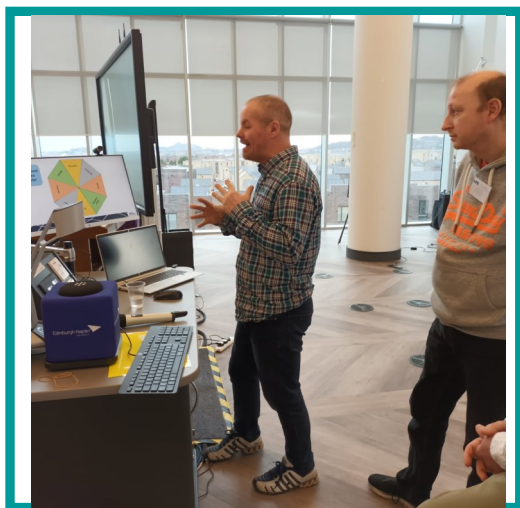


At the end, the Judges said the session had been extremely useful.

They said they enjoyed all the practical information we gave them.

We have been invited again to train more judges in May at Edinburgh Sheriff Court.

Learning Disability (SOLD)



In February we spoke at the Policing Knowledge Exchange Conference. The Police invited us to open the second day of the conference to “set the tone” for the day.

We spoke to around 80 people. The Assistant Chief Constable was there as well as NHS staff, psychologists, police officers, university professors and many more.

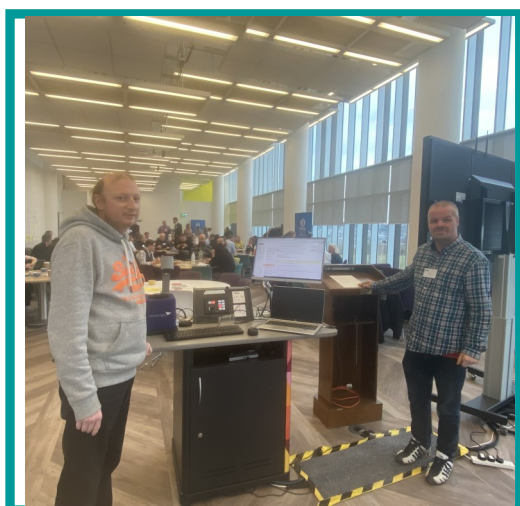
We talked about our lived experience and we could see we made a powerful impact.

We focused on the key reasons people with learning disabilities may come into conflict with the law.

We talked about loneliness, social isolation, lack of community support, being harassed and bullied, being tricked into committing a crime (especially online) and having to go to prison to get support.

We also talked about the key things required for inclusive justice.

Things like early identification of needs, accessible information and additional support for successful long-term rehabilitation.



Tick Tock report



People First took part in the Scottish Human Rights Commission's project measuring the progress of the Coming Home work and linking this to the Right to Independent Living.

This says we must have choice and control over where we live, who we live with and what we do with our life. People in hospital do not have this right. It is also denied to many people with a learning disability forced to live in group homes or care homes.

Rosie Smith and Tony Young gave a presentation at the launch of the report called Tick Tock.



Edinburgh

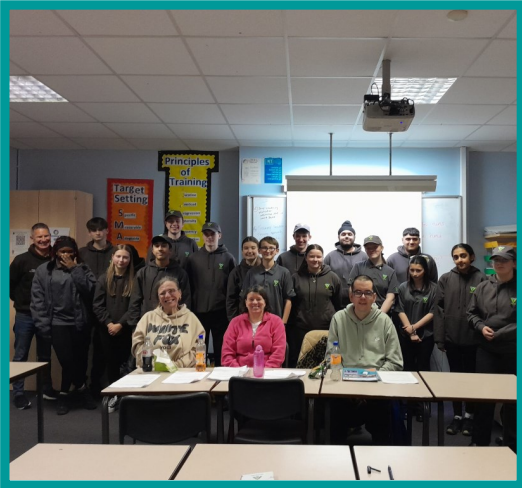
On Friday 17 January, we joined the community open day at Fountainbridge library in Edinburgh, where we also hold regular group meetings.

We spoke to people about our local advocacy groups and all the work that we do. A few Edinburgh members came by to say hello and help out at the stall.

Big shout out to Sheree and Billy for their help! Everyone was very welcoming. We also tried making some origami (shapes made out of paper).



Glasgow



People First members in Glasgow have delivered Hate Crime training to Police Scotland Youth Volunteers over the past year.

We were asked to carry out 7 training sessions to the various groups of youth volunteers across Glasgow.



The aim of the training was to raise awareness of the issues and challenges that people with learning disabilities face. We were also able to talk about our own experience of hate crime.

The feedback from both the young people and Police Officers was very positive.

The members said that the joint work with Police Scotland was worthwhile and very rewarding.

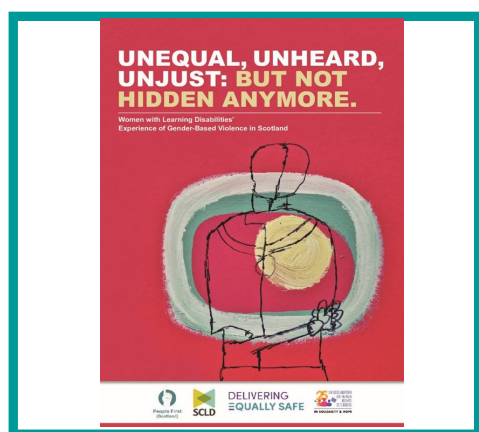


Further partnership work is planned with Police Scotland in the future as they have agreed to deliver two 'Keep Safe' events to People First members in Glasgow.



This month we want to focus on the work of Fife Women's Group because it was International Women's Day on the 8th of March.

The group has been talking about Gender Based Violence and Commercial Sexual Exploitation. We talk about lots of issues which are important to women.



An important piece of work which Susan Burt delivered this month was to the Violence Against Women Partnership in Fife. She spoke powerfully about recommendations from the *Unequal, Unheard, Unjust* report on gender-based violence, focusing on how it impacts women with learning disabilities.

We challenged the Partnership to look at how they can better support women with a learning disability who experience significantly higher rates of gender-based violence. This has to change. We also want to make it easier for women to seek help and the right support.



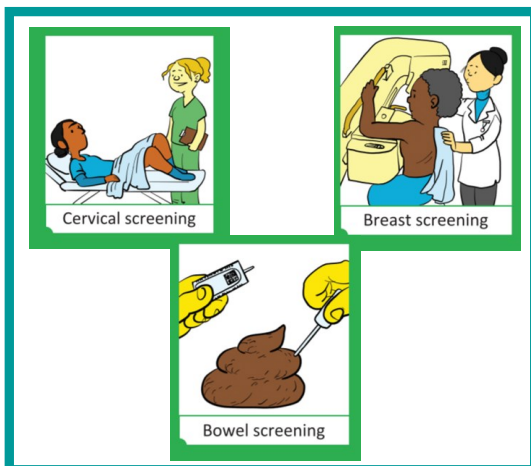
We enjoy being part of work related to International Women's Day and talking about making things better for women.

Midlothian



Members from Midlothian recently took part in focus groups for bowel screening testing and talking mat development with researchers from the University of Glasgow.

Members thought the talks were relaxed and well organised. They let everyone know before the meeting what questions would be asked and included pictures and diagrams to make cancer screening more accessible for people with learning disabilities.



One member said it was a nice experience, and he would work with Glasgow University again.

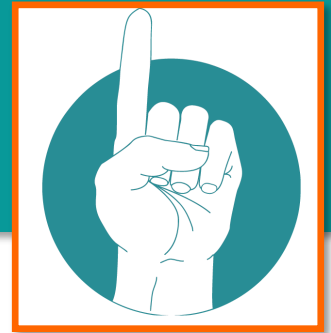
Community officers from Police Scotland came to the Dalkeith group at the end of February. The group shared information about People First and talked about previous experiences with the police.

One member showed them the 999 BSL app she would use if she ever needed help.

Officers said they enjoyed speaking with members and learning from them. Members were keen to learn about the equipment used by the police and find out what they do in the local area.



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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