

People First (Scotland) Newsletter



Summer 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.

Funding



Funding pressures continue to have an impact on third sector organisations including People First. City of Edinburgh are proposing to stop funding collective advocacy.

We will speak up and make the strongest case for funding to continue. We have begun doing this already.

We were successful in getting the maximum core funding we could from Scottish Government. This is something to celebrate.



However, the funding is not enough and the demands are high. We will continue to seek that our role as a Disabled Persons' Organisation is recognised and funded.

Billy Lindsay



Billy Lindsay, who had been a member of People First since 2006, passed away on 28th May 2025.

Billy had been a Director for many years as well as a member the Law and Human Rights Group and Staffing Committee.

Billy had been ill for a long time and he will be missed by his fellow members and Directors.

The Law and Human Rights



Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodivergence (LDAN) Bill

Members continue to attend meetings about the LDAN Bill and offer our views on the development of the Bill.

On proposals about Independent Advocacy :

We want to see long-term, secure funding for collective advocacy which recognizes our expertise.

On proposals about Justice :

We want to see a duty to provide people with the support they need when accessing the justice system.

This includes victims, witnesses and those accused of a crime.



We continue to campaign for legislation specific to learning disability that meets the rights in the United Nations convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

The current proposals do not go far enough to meet our human rights.

Human Rights Group



Adults with Incapacity Act

Last year we responded to a consultation about making changes to the Adults with Incapacity (AWI) Act.

This is the law that allows people with a learning disability to be placed under Guardianship, where someone else makes decisions for us.



Scottish Government recently announced they will not be making any changes to the AWI Act before the Scottish elections in 2026.

We did not think the proposed changes went far enough.

We are calling on Scottish Government to introduce a system of supported decision-making in line with the United Nations convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.



Many other countries around the world have adopted supported decision making and we are frustrated that it is taking so long to introduce this in Scotland.

Supporting Offenders with a



Since April we have been reviewing a big easy read guide from the Scottish Sentencing Council on “Sentencing of crimes”.

The guide talks about what sentences are, how different sentences are given for different crimes and how a sentencing hearing works.

We have recommended many changes to the guide.



The changes will make the guide more accessible to people with a learning disability who are involved with the law.

The Sentencing Council have told us that the work we have been doing is “incredibly helpful” and has been “really helpful to have our perspective and insights”.

Our comments will be used by the lawyers at the Sentencing Council to rewrite the final version of the guide.



In June, two of our members delivered another training to trainee Justices of the Peace at the Edinburgh Sheriff Court.

The training focused on “identifying when someone may have a learning disability and how to support them”.

Learning Disability (SOLD)



We gave them lots of practical examples to help them understand what a learning disability is.

We told them about the support we would want to receive from them if we were in court.

The Judges had lots of questions for us and we had a good discussion. They said they enjoyed the training a lot because it was delivered by us.



They said that hearing from people with lived experience was very important. We have been invited again in September.

In June we were invited by the Scottish Appropriate Adult Network to share our experience of using Appropriate Adults services.

We spoke to the new Appropriate Adults in Edinburgh and told them about some of the difficult experiences we have had.

The trainees said they want to make sure no one else has a bad experience like we did.



Equally Safe



We are thrilled to share that our new Gender-Based Violence Audit Toolkit is now up and running. The launch event was a big success with great attendance from councils, charities, and support services across Scotland.



Our toolkit is all about making services better and easier for women with learning disabilities who have faced abuse. We spent a whole year meeting every week to share our experiences and ideas. By helping to design this toolkit, we made sure the language is clear and the ideas are informed by lived experience.



People at the event told us they loved the toolkit and believe it will make a real difference. We are excited about the future, especially the ideas for training staff to put changes in place as a result of the toolkit. This training will be co-designed by people with learning disabilities.

Together, we have shown that when women with learning disabilities lead, we can make strong, positive change.

**You can access the toolkit here:
<https://equallysafe.sclد.org.uk/toolkit/>**

Fife



Michael Stirling recently gave a presentation at Fife College, Dunfermline. He spoke about how he got involved with People First, what it means to be a Director, and why collective advocacy is so important.

Students were excited about the idea of starting a People First group on their campus after hearing Michael speak.



David Scott and Michael Stirling gave a presentation at Fife Independent Advice Living Hub explaining what People First is and what we do.

The presentation was attended both in person and online and everyone showed interest in the work we do.

Evaluation



We recently took part in an external evaluation day. SCLD asked members about the work we do as part of the 'Our Powerful Voice' lottery funding and wrote a report.

The report showed how important our work is stating, 'People First (Scotland) is more than just an organisation. It is a community of people with learning disabilities who are leading change, challenging injustice, and pushing for a more equal society.'

Edinburgh



In May, Edinburgh members met at Stockbridge library for a workshop with FAIR, a local service that provides advice and information on benefits, to people with learning disabilities.

We discussed the changes that are happening to benefits and how to access support with the benefits system.



In our local advocacy groups, we have been discussing the value of collective advocacy and what we get out of it.

We want to show that what we do is important and speak up against funding cuts.

Members said:

“At the People First groups I learnt to speak up more, because I was a quiet person before. I learnt about agendas and how to run meetings and I got elected to be Chair of my local group.”

“If I wasn’t at the group, I would be sad and I would miss it. I would be stuck in the house with nothing to do.”

“People with learning disabilities have a right to advocacy. It is our human right!”



Clackmannanshire



In April, members, in partnership with the Clackmannanshire Access Panel Group, held a public transport meeting with the Council, CTSI and partner organisations, and people from the community.

During the meeting, a presentation was given about current transport systems in Clackmannanshire, followed by group discussions and a question and answer section to discuss how public transport can be accessible for people with a learning disability in the Clackmannanshire area.



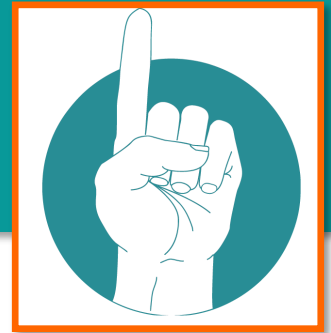
Midlothian

Members in Penicuik have spent time speaking about the new key message on supported decision making. They think it's right that support should change to meet everyone's needs in their whole life.

It is important to make your own decisions but have help to do that. Members like being part of People First to learn about human rights and are glad there is a framework to show people how things can and should be done together.



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.



**People First (Scotland)
77-79 Easter Road
Edinburgh
EH7 5PW**

Phone 0131 478 7707

Email admin@peoplefirstscotland.org

Website www.peoplefirstscotland.org



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