

On the 11th November 2021, Sheffield Voices which is part of Disability Sheffield, brought together Self Advocates from across the North East and Yorkshire to ask them how they feel the Government has protected their rights as a disabled person over the last five years. Information has also been collected from our own self advocacy group and also Burton Street Foundation day centre.

Our accessible consultation forms part of the UNCRDP (United Nations Convention for Rights of Disabled People) Shadow Report which is filled in every five years.

The group talked about how they felt the Government had failed people with a learning disability on many of their rights.

People felt that their rights had been ignored during the Covid crisis by not providing timely accessible information. They talked about easy read not being available and also the Government not having signers at press conferences which put them at risk as they didn't know what was happening. Some people talked about them having breakdowns and meltdowns because of this and one person had to move into a hospital because he became so poorly.

People also commented by putting people more at risk by not putting them on the 'vulnerable person' register and people not being able to get shopping. Some people couldn't queue up for food.

People were very upset that the Government allowed medics to issue DNR (do not resuscitate) orders on files of people with learning disabilities and Autism.

The group felt the Government had failed to protect their rights under Article 19 which is the right to Independent Living as many people are living in hospitals and care homes because there is a lack of money and will to support people properly in the community.

People also felt that people with learning disabilities were more at risk now from being abused, tortured and treated with less dignity and respect. people talked about the abuse scandal at Whorlton Hall and how many other hospitals and care setting have been rated inadequate and staff found guilty of abuse but yet care companies have been allowed to keep contracts, Cygnet who owned Whorlton

Hall being one of them who have still got contacts in Sheffield and other parts of the country.

People also felt that they have less choice about where they live due to shortages in housing and some do not feel free and safe in care homes and hospitals which falls under Articles 14, 15 and 16 and that police cuts had left them also feeling unsafe out and about especially at night time.

In addition, the group also felt that the Government had not protected people's rights under Article 28 which is about standards of living.

People said that they had not had enough employment choices and that they do not have enough money to live on. They talked about big problems with the benefits system where the introduction of Universal Credit and the withdrawal of DLA/PIP for a lot of people with hidden disabilities had had a significant impact on their lives. They also talked about the inaccessibility of information and assessments and how people are being put through unnecessary trauma to claim their benefits.

People generally felt the Government didn't listen to their voices and that vital Self Advocacy projects to help to protect people's rights and disabled persons user led organisations that support people to come together as a community were closing and not being properly funded which falls under Article 21 and 29.

People from Burton Street felt that the UK is not very accessible and more needs to be done to solve some of these access issues. people talked about pavement and curb issues and also not being able to get into buildings. People felt that businesses and organisations are not being taken to court enough under the Equality Act.

They also told us that they don't feel they have enough support to go out at night and that there are not enough places for people to go to with a learning disability where they feel safe. People felt that they need more social care budgets. They also talked about having to pay for carers when they go out and how they can't do things they want to do because this is a barrier to them.

The group had great ideas about what needs to happen to make things better.

It was widely felt that we need a new government as the current Government did not care about people with disabilities, particularly learning disabilities.

There were many suggestions about benefits, one of those suggestions was to reinstate DLA and ESA and give more jobs to people with a learning disability and Autism to advise organisations.

Some people felt that businesses could help people set up their own businesses.

People said that not feel they have confidence in our current Government and that disabled people have been treated appallingly over the last five years.

Kind regards

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