

Dialogue 1 (Scottish Government Framework)

Disabled people are the experts in our own lives, involve us and support our disabled people's organisations

Policy and decision-makers, service providers, and others should involve us, disabled people, in the design and delivery of policies and practices from the first step, and listen to us about what policies need to change. We, the experts in our lives, know best what is needed to make services fit for purpose and accessible, and we are adept at working with others to do so. Getting things right first time round can save unlimited problems and expense later. The Scottish Government (and Local Authorities and other funding bodies) should ensure that Disabled People's Organisations continue to receive adequate funds not just so that we can support disabled people during the pandemic, vital as that is, but so that disabled people can contribute to the development of the future framework for Scotland. Funds issued in response to Covid-19 to any organisation or sector should ensure that inclusion and access for disabled people are included in the funding bid and delivery of the work that is funded.

Why the contribution is important

Disabled people's lived experience is critical to our national planning for the future and how we transition to that future. At the outset of this pandemic, disabled people were more likely to be living in poverty, to be unemployed, and to have fewer qualifications, for example, due to decades of widespread discrimination, and austerity, welfare reform, and diminishing support for independent living. This means that disabled people had very low capacity with which to deal with the pandemic from its outset and with the rapid and unprecedented changes made in response to it. Disabled people, and our Disabled People's Organisations (organisations run by disabled people for disabled people ourselves), should be recognised as experts in planning the changes being made to address Covid-19 and in planning for the new normal and how we transition to that place. Inclusion Scotland surveyed over 800 disabled people and those who care for them during April 2020. We are continuing to gather evidence of the impact of changes and policy in practice. Why? We understand the issues, we are already at the front line already. 'Lockdown' is not a new experience for many disabled people, particularly those with some long-term health conditions, compromised immunity, energy impairments or mental health problems. It is ironic that much of the changes we have been calling for such as proper investment in social care support, remote working practices, and accessible information, are now being provided as part of our national response to a health pandemic. Our exclusion, even from initiatives specifically designed to support us, is unjustifiable. Disabled people already know what happens when policies and services are designed without our involvement. On a daily basis since the start of the crisis, we have seen sweeping changes being rolled out to protect public health, share information, protect the economy, and to enable access to food and welfare. However, not all of these changes are being delivered as intended and some of them even have negative consequences for disabled people. Disabled People's Organisations are steered by Boards and memberships of disabled people. Our principles and approaches are based on disabled people's lived experiences of policies and practices. We harness this to influence strategic decision-making both locally and nationally. The United Nations is clear, state parties have an obligation to involve and support disabled people's own organisations. DPOs work collectively and with other organisations from other communities.

by [InclusionScotland](#) on May 11, 2020 at 05:19PM

