

Manifesto Briefing

Our voices ■ Our choices

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A publicity campaign to tackle negative public attitudes towards disabled people

The Problem:

- Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to be bullied at school or face harassment when going about our daily lives.
- The number of reported cases of disability hate crime is increasing, and disabled women are more likely to be victims of gender related violence.
- Fifty percent of disabled people responding to a survey by disability charity Scope reported an increase in hostile attitudes towards them.

Our Solutions:

- As a matter of urgency, negative attitudes towards disabled people must be challenged by Scottish Government.
- Working in and with schools so children develop positive attitudes towards disabled people.

Key Facts:

65% of respondents to an Inclusion Scotland survey reported that attitudes towards disabled people had worsened over the last 5 years and 43% rated societal attitudes towards disabled people as 'mostly negative'.

- Inclusion Scotland on-line survey, Summer 2014

In 2014-15, 177 charges were reported with an aggravation of prejudice relating to disability, 20% more than in 2013-14.

- <http://www.copfs.gov.uk/images/HateCrimeinScotland2014-15.pdf>

Disabled women, are twice as likely as non-disabled women to experience gender-based violence, including domestic abuse, sexual assault and rape.

- <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/shop/uncategorised/making-the-links-disabled-women-and-domestic-violence/>

For many disabled people, harassment is a commonplace experience. Many come to accept it as inevitable.

- <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/hidden-plain-sight-inquiry-disability-related-harassment-executive-summary-scotland>

Disabled people's confidence in participating in wider society can be eroded by daily experience of verbal and sometimes even physical abuse.

"I avoid going to the centre of town as I feel vulnerable – it is not a pleasure anymore"

"I just felt I don't want to go through this again. I'd rather stay at home where I am safe ... I just wouldn't go out."

Disabled women and girls disproportionately experience gender based violence, are more susceptible to violence across the life course and are more likely to suffer more severe injuries as a result. Experiences of domestic abuse for disabled women and girls differ to those of non-disabled women and girls because of the double discrimination they face as women and as disabled people.

Negative attitudes are often fostered by media coverage whipping up support for benefit cuts by branding us fraudsters and scroungers. Disabled people and their organisations feel that this trend is being perpetuated by political rhetoric and media coverage of welfare reform.

As a matter of urgency, negative attitudes towards disabled people must be challenged by Scottish Government. Previous campaigns such as for "See Me" and "Zero Tolerance" have successfully challenged public attitudes.

Stonewall and LGBT Youth Scotland have worked with schools to change attitudes around sexuality. Investment is similarly needed in a programme to change children's attitudes towards their disabled people.

An ongoing programme of campaigning and education could succeed over time in achieving a positive change in non-disabled people's attitudes and, in turn, disabled people's lives.



Stopping the harassment of Disabled People

A toolkit for Disabled People's Organisations and organisations that support Disabled People

Revised September 2015

Inclusion Scotland has produced a toolkit to support Disabled People's Organisations and other organisations that support disabled people to challenge disability related harassment. For more information on this toolkit or this issues raised in this briefing, please contact us:

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