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Yet another year has passed and Inclusion Scotland continues to stride ahead! 15 disabled Councillors, a Social Security Bill that reflects our needs and a vibrant internship programme are just three of the highlights that leap out to me from this report.

However, we’re still some way from the inclusion ideal we seek. Adequate social care, employment opportunities and removal of barriers to full participation in society remain priorities for the future. Sadly, we still face barriers to travel, social interaction, employment … The list goes on.

Action to change policy and practice is only successful if it translates into making a difference to disabled people’s lives. Inclusion Scotland’s activities can only ever be part of that process. But there are things – even small things – that each of us can do towards getting barriers removed. As a personal example, I arranged a meeting with a vision-impaired councillor who had been one of the disabled candidates for election supported by the Access to Elected Office Fund delivered by Inclusion Scotland. I showed him some of the barriers I regularly encounter as a vision-impaired person myself. At last I – and other disabled people – have access to elected members who really understand our situation and can make the case where it really matters. This was just a very small step towards pushing for change. Let’s hope that together, collectively, we can all make bigger steps in the coming year.

Terry Robinson
2017–2018 was another very busy year for Inclusion Scotland. We not only worked to influence policy, notably on Social Security, we also supported disabled people through the Access to Elected Office Fund to become policymakers themselves. Fifteen were elected as councillors.

Through the ‘We Can Work’ internship scheme, not only did the interns acquire new knowledge and experience, so too did their employers. We also took action on employment by making this the theme of this year’s Disabled People’s Summit. This focused on ‘Employerability’ – what employers need to do to make work accessible to disabled people, because it shouldn’t always just be about our ‘employability’.

At local level, our project in Highland has been getting to the heart of what empowerment means to disabled people in their communities. At international level, with Deaf and Disabled People’s Organisations in Scotland and across the UK, we called attention to the UK Government’s breaches of our human rights under the UN Convention. We also began to explore the potential implications of Brexit for our rights.

No one denies the scale of the barriers we confront, the damage inflicted by austerity and the failings of social care. But during 2017–2018, disabled people showed that sometimes our actions really can help to bring about positive change towards disabled people’s inclusion, equality and the fulfilment of our human rights.

Dr Sally Witcher, OBE
Mission Statement

Inclusion Scotland works to achieve positive changes to policy and practice, so that we disabled people are fully included throughout all Scottish society as equal citizens. We do this by:

- Influencing decision-makers, ensuring that disabled people are involved in developing effective solutions for policy and practice that reflect our expertise by experience and meet our needs and aspirations.
- Supporting disabled people to be decision-makers themselves, promoting the equal representation of disabled people as policy-makers and our right to make decisions about our own lives.
- Developing capacity, awareness and engagement, of disabled people, disabled people’s organisations, and the organisations and institutions that affect our lives.
Our funders

Inclusion Scotland continued to receive a core funding grant from the Scottish Government’s Equality Unit. They also funded our work on internships and access to politics, our Highland project, and provided additional contributions towards costs for trips to Strasbourg and Geneva.

The Scottish Government’s Community Planning and Empowerment Unit funded the Access to Elected Office Fund Scotland.

We received funding for our work on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Scotland).

As the Scottish partner in the UK-wide Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning (DRILL) we received funding from The Big Lottery Fund.

We would like to thank Scottish Government, Equality and Human Rights Commission (Scotland) and The Big Lottery Fund for their financial support.
Influencing policy

Throughout the year, Inclusion Scotland’s policy agenda was dominated by the setting up of a new Scottish Social Security system, following devolution of disability benefits to the Scottish Parliament. We worked with disabled people and third sector partners, including the Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform (SCoWR), Camphill Scotland, the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Citizens Advice Scotland, to achieve significant improvements to the Social Security Bill. These included:

- A right to access Independent Advocacy services.
- A right to be communicated with in accessible ways.
- Disabled people not being required to undergo unnecessary medical assessments.
- The right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- An Independent Scrutiny Commission.
- Benefits always paid in cash unless claimants choose otherwise.

Inclusion Scotland gave written and oral evidence to the Social Security Committee. We also met with MSPs from different parties and the Social Security Minister to press the case for the changes we wanted to see. We were actively involved in lots of different stakeholder groups. In particular, our CEO became the Deputy Chair of the influential Disability and Carers Benefits Expert Advisory Group. We used all these opportunities and more to advise the Minister and officials on the design of the new social security system and how it should be delivered, to make sure they reflect disabled people’s views, interests and lived experience.
Influencing policy

Another key issue for our policy work was **Human Rights**. In August 2017 the UK and devolved governments were examined by the UN Committee in Geneva on their implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We went to Geneva too, with Deaf and Disabled People’s Organisations from across the UK. We all wanted to ensure that the Committee got to hear what Deaf and disabled people and their organisations thought about progress – or lack of it.

Before the examination, Inclusion Scotland had worked with Scottish Deaf and Disabled People’s Organisations to develop a report setting out what we thought about the situation in Scotland. We then worked with UK partners to develop a UK-wide report. There were some big differences between the four nations, but the UK Government’s austerity cuts have affected disabled people right across the whole UK very badly.

Although the UK Government representatives kept insisting that the UK Government was the world leader on disabled people’s human rights, the UN Committee did not agree. The Chair said that their austerity cuts had created a ‘human catastrophe’.
Influencing policy

The Committee made lots of recommendations on what they needed to do. But there was praise for the involvement of Disabled People’s Organisations in the development of the Scottish Government’s ‘Fairer Scotland for Disabled People’ plan, the Scottish social security system and the accessible transport strategy.

In Scotland we want to see those plans on paper become actions that change disabled people’s lives for the better. So we worked with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission to run an event in Edinburgh, with another in Inverness, to look at how all the recommendations apply in Scotland and what needs to be done.

Unfortunately, there was little progress to report on Social Care Support during the year. Despite our best efforts, including involvement in advisory groups like the Health and Social Care Partners Group and the review of targets and indicators among others, healthcare continued to dominate the integration agenda to the near exclusion of social care.

On 14 September we hosted a Question Time debate to mark the anniversary of the launch of the ‘Shared Ambition on the Future Funding of Social Care Support’. This had set out a shared vision for social care support as an investment, enabling people to have a life, not just to stay alive. There was little to celebrate, a year on. Evidence has continued to mount of cuts to care packages and the devastating impact these have on disabled people’s lives.
Influencing policy

But it was not all gloom. Inclusion Scotland was involved in developing the new Independent Living Fund Scotland Transition Fund. This is to support young disabled people to be more independent. And towards the end of the year we secured Scottish Government funding for an exciting new project aiming to put the voices of people who use social care support at the heart of developments.

Every year we hold a ‘Disabled People’s Summit’ when disabled people can come together to talk about a subject that matters to them and put forward proposals for action. This year’s was on Employment and how to close the employment gap between disabled people and non-disabled people. The Summit, called ‘Situations Vacant: Employerability and disabled people’s right to work’, was attended by over 100 disabled people and it was chaired by the BBC’s Ian Hamilton. It aimed to shift the focus onto the critically important role of employers, what they need to do to make work accessible and inclusive to disabled people, and the support they need to do this.

We called this ‘Employerability’. We wanted to get across that disabled people’s unemployment is not necessarily due to disabled people’s lack of ‘employability’.
Influencing policy

The First Minister and the Minister for Employability and Training both joined us at the Summit. The First Minister said to the audience of disabled people: ‘Your experiences, your expertise, your ideas are probably the most important asset that we have when it comes to improving the lives and experiences of disabled people.’ The solutions put forward by disabled people at the Summit were gathered into a report to the Scottish Government to steer their future actions.

There was also more to do to push forward proposals on Housing that came out of the previous year’s Summit. In July 2017 we presented the Summit report ‘Our Place: Our Space: the evidence on disabled people's housing issues’ to the Minister for Local Government and Housing and the Minister for Social Security. We then worked with partners to progress the report’s key recommendations and to raise public awareness of the housing issues faced by disabled people due to the chronic shortage of accessible housing in Scotland. This included working to inform and influence the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s statutory housing inquiry.

Exploring the implications of Brexit for disabled people and for our rights was a new and very important area of work. In October 2017 we held a ‘Pop-up Think Tank’ to explore this, bringing together a wide range of people to share information and ideas. A report of the event was presented to Mike Russell MSP, the Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, at a Scottish Government round-table on Brexit and disabled people in Scotland. We then developed a statement of principles on Brexit and disability rights, as a tool for influencing debate.
Influencing policy

In 2017–2018, Inclusion Scotland:

- Responded to 14 Scottish Government Consultations.
- Submitted written evidence to 4 Scottish Parliament Committee Inquiries.
- Gave oral evidence on 4 occasions.
- Provided 14 briefings to MSPs to inform debates in the Scottish Parliament.

Inclusion Scotland’s policy team also did some work on other policy issues. This year, examples included:

- **Transport**, including disabled parking, concessionary fares, shared streets and the accessible transport framework.
- **Mental health**, and the review of the Adults with Incapacity Act.
- **Education**, including mainstreaming in schools and prejudice-based bullying.
- **Hate crime** and **gender-based violence**.
- Developing a model for a ‘Justice Hub’ that would help increase disabled people’s **access to justice**.
Promoting participation

A highlight of the year was the successful delivery of the new Access to Elected Office Fund (Scotland) pilot project, funded by the Scottish Government. This provided funding to level the playing field by meeting additional impairment-related costs for disabled people wishing to stand for selection and election as candidates in the May 2017 Local Council Elections.

In 2017–2018 the Access to Elected Office Fund (Scotland):

- Supported 44 disabled people to stand for selection as candidates.
- Supported the 39 who were selected as candidates with funding to meet a wide range of extra costs.
- Contributed to the result that a total of 15 were elected as councillors, from a range of Parties, in 12 Local Authority areas.

Both disabled people who were elected and others who were supported to stand for election said how important support from the Fund had been:

‘I wouldn't have pursued my ambition to stand again without Inclusion Scotland’s help. We are now in the position where our council chambers will be more reflective of our communities.’

–Jennifer Adam McGregor (SNP, Paisley North East & Ralston, elected May 2017)
Promoting participation

‘Inclusion Scotland knows the challenges disabled people face and work to break down barriers and increase participation. They work to ensure disabled people are included in society and our communities.’

–Sarah Anderson (Scottish Greens Candidate May 2017, Johnstone North, Kilbarchan, Howwood and Lochwinnoch.)

The Scottish Government has since committed to making the Fund available until the 2021 Scottish Parliament Election, and for Scottish by-elections in the meantime. The success of the Fund and its innovative design has generated great interest around Europe.

Our Access to Politics project continued to provide support and advice to disabled people who want to be more involved in politics.

We also worked with political parties and organisations to promote full inclusion and participation. In February 2018 we held an event with our disabled activist network to lay the groundwork for an Access to Politics Charter. The Charter will challenge political parties to commit to full participation for disabled people.
Promoting participation

Another important way to promote change to the policies and practices that have an impact on disabled people’s lives is by having more disabled people working in the organisations responsible for them. The ‘We Can Work’ internship programme had a great year with the recruitment of the first Scottish Government interns, more interns in the public and voluntary sectors and the return of our popular Parliamentary internships. We also supported our first private sector internship with IT technology company Sopra Steria, through ‘Real Inclusion Ltd’, our trading arm.

Having disabled interns working in key organisations in public life is really important for promoting equality throughout society.

‘Get behind Inclusion Scotland and help them shape our workforce! Spread the word to your family and friends!’
– Susan, intern with the Care Inspectorate

Sharing disabled person-led practice with these organisations through high quality work experience for interns is definitely a win-win for all involved through ‘Real Inclusion Ltd’, our trading arm.

‘How can we tell people what to do if we are not doing it ourselves?’
– Public sector employer
Promoting participation

Disabled people need to be able to participate in policymaking at local as well as national level. Following completion of a successful pilot year, this year our Highland Engagement Project forged ahead with our Meet the Minister event where there was discussion with Jeane Freeman about plans for a new Scottish Social Security and the Scottish Government’s ‘Fairer Scotland for Disabled People’ Delivery Plan.

With members and stakeholders regionally and locally, together with Mid Ross Community Partnership, we developed a pilot volunteering opportunity for a disabled person to work with the Partnership to raise local planning issues for disabled people.

We supported Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) to deliver an event on the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015) (CEA), presenting our own CEA work to Highland’s third sector. With SCDC we also organised a focus group for mental health service users on the CEA, looking at Participation Requests to increase involvement in an NHS Service Redesign.

In March, together with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC), we held an event in Inverness on the UN’s Concluding Observations for the UK on Disability rights. 40 disabled people contributed to workshops on what Scottish Government could do and we joined in a panel to discuss the observations.
Promoting participation

Inclusion Scotland also continued to be involved in promoting disabled people’s participation in research, through the Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning (DRILL) Programme. We are the Scottish partners in this 5-year, UK-wide, Big Lottery funded programme. DRILL provides funding for ground-breaking projects that explore new solutions to independent living and new ways to carry out research. Each project is delivered by researchers and Disabled People’s Organisations. They work together as equal partners to co-produce the research. So far the DRILL programme has funded 32 projects across the UK. Six of these are in Scotland. These are research projects into:

- Decision-making by people with learning disabilities.
- Participation in civic and public life for people with mental health conditions.
- The self-directed support system.
- Adapted social housing lettings.
- A society that is fit for autistic people.
- Transport and the accessibility of toilets.

This year the first Scottish project finished its research. We congratulate People First Scotland and Animate Consulting for their work on decision-making by people with learning disabilities.

In addition, Inclusion Scotland became the lead partner for a major new DRILL-funded research project called ‘Understanding and overcoming negative attitudes towards disabled people: What works in practice?’. Each of the four UK DRILL delivery partners chose a related theme to research. Ours is on intersectional discrimination and the attitudes of service providers.
Where next?

Like any Annual Report, this one only gives a snapshot of our work at a particular point in time. Much comes before and much comes after. Some of what is to come can be foreseen. Some cannot.

Looking ahead, it is clear that the Social Security System will become an Act and regulations containing important detail will go through the parliamentary process. There will be much to do to make sure the new system works as well in practice as it does on paper. We will continue to monitor and evaluate the Scottish Government’s implementation of its ‘A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People’ Delivery Plan, and action at UK and Scottish Government level on the UN Committee’s Concluding Observations on action that must be taken to progress disabled people’s human rights.

There are plans for a major Congress on employment, which we will use to drive home the importance of ‘Employerability’. Our work in Highland looks set to shift into a new phase. Having worked with disabled people to identify action they want to see, it will next be a matter of firming up proposals and seeking additional funding to implement them.

The DRILL (Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning) programme will be making its final awards. Meanwhile, projects already funded will be concluding. The next task will be to promote their findings and push for action to take them forward. And the four DRILL partners will themselves be carrying out new research on changing attitudes towards disabled people, with research in Scotland focusing on intersectional discrimination.
Where next?

The highly successful ‘We Can Work’ internship programme will continue to offer many varied opportunities in different sectors. In particular, we will explore the scope to create more opportunities for private sector placements. We will seek to build support from all political parties for the Access to Politics Charter, which will be launched at the Scottish Parliament in June 2018.

Of course, there is much we cannot know. Key among the unknowables is the impact of Brexit on disabled people in Scotland. We will continue to keep a close watch on developments and seek funding to take the discussions out to local disabled people and decision-makers. Similarly, while outcomes cannot be foreseen, we will continue to push for a national target on accessible housing and new standards, working with local housing chiefs and private builders too. Our quest for funding for an accessible Justice Hub for disabled people will also continue.

Last, but in no way least, we want to do something to address the worrying drop in numbers of Disabled People’s Organisations and to strengthen our movement. We will find out more from our members about how we can best support them. Our annual AGM conference will make a start on addressing this. We also need to think about the future sustainability of the disability movement. We need to find ways of involving and supporting more young disabled people to create the future they want to see. This will therefore be the focus for the next Disabled People’s Annual Summit.

In sum, once again we look forward to another busy, challenging year, and to working with disabled people and our allies towards disabled people’s full inclusion, now and in the future to come.
Our board 2017–2018

Inclusion Scotland's board of directors is responsible for the governance and strategic direction of the organisation.

Chris Baird (Vice-Convenor)
Jim Berrington (until September 2017)
Nancy Birney (Treasurer)
Tressa Burke
Jim Elder-Woodward
Surinder Kaur Saroya (until December 2017)
Derek Kelter
Ryan McMullan
Irena Paterson
Terry Robinson (Convenor)
Kirstein Rummery (from December 2017)
Kenneth Tomory
Allan Tubb (from December 2017)

We would like to thank all our board members for giving their time to Inclusion Scotland's work. Particular thank-yous go to Jim Berrington and Surinder Kaur Saroya, who both stepped down in 2017, for their many years of service.
Finance


### Income

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Funding from</th>
<th>Project:</th>
<th>£</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Scottish Government</td>
<td>Core &amp; ILIS</td>
<td>414,500</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to Politics</td>
<td>21,141</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to Elected Office</td>
<td>100,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Public Life</td>
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<td>Local policy and engagement</td>
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<td>APPLE</td>
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<td>Equality and Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>UNCRP</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Lottery Fund</td>
<td>DRILL</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>935,715</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other income:**

- DWP - Access to Work: Various, £48,686
- Contributions to shared costs: Various, £23,670
- Cost contributions: Various, £10,747
- Subsidiary trading income: Various, £5,338
- Other income: Various, £21,982

**Total income:** £1,046,138

### Expenditure

- Own staff costs: £611,571
- Internship staff costs: £39,890
- Running costs (rent, insurance, telephone, etc.): £99,308
- Conference, meetings and travel expenses: £64,833
- Professional and audit fees: £13,377
- Project and staff support costs: £55,692
- Management fees: £3,940
- Subscriptions: £540
- Interpretation services: £17,449
- Sundry expenses: £6,751

**Total expenditure:** £913,351

**Total income less total expenditure:** £132,787
Thank-yous

- All our members and our networks. We couldn't carry out the work we do without your support and involvement.
- All the disabled people who attended our engagement events throughout the year and who contributed their views.
- All the politicians who have supported our work, used our briefings, come to or spoken at our events.
- The Disabled People's Organisations who are members of the Scottish Independent Living Coalition.
- All of our interns, employers and support workers who have taken part in the internship programme and helped make it a success.
- All the speakers and chairpersons we have had at our many events throughout the year – too many to name, but you have all been fantastic!
- Our accountants for their work on the annual audit of our accounts.
- The DRILL Scottish National Advisory Group, Central Research Committee and Ethics Committee members.
- Shirley Young, who worked with us as a consultant to support our work to deliver DRILL.
- The Advisory Group and Decision-making panel for the Access to Elected Office Fund Scotland.
- The Highlands Project Advisory Group.
- David Wilson and team, International Public Policy Institute, University of Strathclyde.
- Sarah Doherty, Insight Institute, University of Strathclyde.
- Iain Nisbett, Education Law Consultant.
Notes

If you require a copy of this report in an alternative format then please get in touch via the details on the back page of this report.