

SCLD FACT SHEET



EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Gender Based Violence

Globally, 90% of women with learning disabilities have been subjected to sexual abuse, with 68% experiencing sexual abuse before turning 18.

Robust data collection is critical to advancing equality and non-discrimination in Scotland. However, we are still to see disaggregated data routinely produced on the experience of people with learning disabilities in basic health data and across social, economic, and political life. Intersectional data on gender-based violence and learning disability are even poorer. In Scotland, there is no dataset on women with learning disabilities who experience gender-based violence.

The best evidence from Scotland includes a small-scale study conducted in Glasgow that showed that 73% of the 62 participating disabled women had experienced domestic abuse, and 43% had been sexually assaulted (Wise Women, 2015).



[He] stabbed me in the neck. Then the police asked me if I was doing foreplay; I didn't even know what that meant.

UPR Focus Group Participant (2021)



Margaret Fleming: The teenager who was forgotten for 17 years



More Information

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Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities

Scotland has made steps in advancing equality and non-discrimination through the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act (2021). However, following the Act's passing, opposition political parties claimed that the Act has a detrimental impact on individuals' freedom of speech and have threatened to repeal it.

Meanwhile, people with learning disabilities said they are not believed when reporting a hate crime (Wiseman

and Watson, 2021). This discrimination is compounded by negative media dialogue, which devalues people with learning disabilities' lives.

For example, UK media commentary throughout the pandemic claimed that COVID-19 would "only impact the vulnerable", suggesting that the lives of people with learning disabilities, who were at higher risk of death than the general population, did not matter.

Hate Crime

In Scotland in 59% (130 incidents) of disability aggravated crimes between 2018-19, perpetrators showed prejudice towards those with a learning disability.

The boys dragged me round the back... and hit me with table and chairs... I feel a bit scared when walking about the streets now.

SCLD Hate Crime Video
(Unpublished)

Recommendation



- 1** UK, including devolved nations, to implement improved approaches to data collection and publication in line with Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This includes disability disaggregated data on rates of reported gender-based violence.
- 2** UK Government and devolved nations (Scotland) to develop national guidance for media on reporting on learning disabilities.

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