



What does inclusive recruitment look like and feel like?

A case study by Linda Mitchell

What does inclusive recruitment look like and feel like?

Earlier this year the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD) Chief Executive handed in their notice and the SCLD Board began their search for SCLD's next Chief Executive.

The Board and the SCLD team were committed to including people with learning disabilities who work alongside SCLD in the recruitment process from start to finish.

The recruitment journey started on the 16th July 2024 and concluded mid-October with the successful recruitment of SCLD's next Chief Executive.

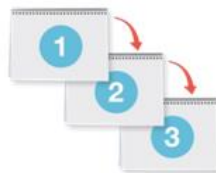
To meet the accessibility requirements of our colleagues with learning disabilities all the information shared throughout the process was created in Easy Read and in Audio.

Aspen People were the recruitment agency who were commissioned to support the search for SCLD's new Chief Executive. [SCLD - Chief Executive - Aspen People](#)

SCLD Chief Executive Recruitment



Eddie and the Board need your help in finding SCLD's new Chief Executive.



The next steps are the:

1. Meet the candidates
2. Shortlisting and interview
3. Feedback session



Please look at the dates to see if you are free to attend.

Can you help find a new Chief Executive for SCLD?

SCLD's Board of Trustees invited 16 of our colleagues with learning disabilities from around Scotland and colleagues from Aspen People to an in-person workshop to share what needed to happen to find a new Chief Executive and how people might get involved.



The graphic is a workshop invitation for SCLD. At the top, a purple banner reads "Help SCLD find our next Chief Executive" with the SCLD logo to the right. Below this, a circular portrait of a man in a suit is followed by two right-pointing arrows (one pink, one teal) and a circular icon of a person with a magnifying glass and a green checkmark. On the left, a purple envelope icon with a white star is next to the heading "Workshop Invite". The main text reads: "As one of SCLD's valued advisors you are invited to a workshop about finding a new Chief Executive." To the right, event details are listed: "When: Tuesday 16th July 2024", "Time: 1:00pm - 3:30pm", and "Where: Share Scotland, 33 Dava Street, Ibrox, Glasgow G51 2JA". Below the text are icons for a calendar showing Tuesday 16th July, two analog clocks showing 1:00 and 3:30, and a building photo. At the bottom, there is a contact bar with a "made with photosymbols" logo, a photo of Lucy, the text "Contact Lucy", a phone icon, the number "0141 248 3733", an email icon, and the email address "Lucy.g@scld.co.uk".

Help SCLD find our next Chief Executive SCLD

Workshop Invite
As one of SCLD's valued advisors you are invited to a workshop about finding a new Chief Executive.

When: Tuesday 16th July 2024
Time: 1:00pm - 3:30pm
Where: Share Scotland,
33 Dava Street, Ibrox, Glasgow G51 2JA

Tuesday 16 July 1:00 3:30

made with photosymbols®

Contact Lucy 0141 248 3733 Lucy.g@scld.co.uk

At this

workshop we shared an accessible presentation about the ways that people could be involved in the recruitment process.

1. Sharing thoughts on the values and attributes that a Chief Executive of SCLD must have
2. Creating a microsite and a video which would be used on the Aspen People website [SCLD](#)
3. Being involved in a 'Meet the candidates' session
4. Being involved in the shortlisting and in the interview.
5. Providing feedback on the process

At this workshop our colleagues with learning disabilities shared their thoughts on the values and attributes that a chief executive at SCLD must have.

This information was captured in a word cloud.

This information was used by the Board to inform the job description and person specification.

The job description and supporting information had Easy Read versions created.



This was a first for the recruitment agency in working with stakeholders with learning disabilities. Aspen People embraced the experience, and their feedback stressed the value and the richness of the feedback from people with learning disabilities and how this supported their understanding of what people were looking for in their new Chief Executive.

‘Everybody getting together, doing it together feeling that it was something we did as a team. Everybody appreciated one another.’
Colleague with learning disabilities

The SCLD team followed up with our colleagues with learning disabilities to find out which areas of the recruitment process they would like to be involved in.

People have busy lives and some people opted to attend the first workshop, some people wanted to be involved in the 'Meet the Candidates' session; some people were keen to be involved in the shortlisting and some people wanted to be involved in all steps of the recruitment process.

An Easy Read plan was created and shared with everyone.

'I don't get to do this with my own organisation. I felt included!

Colleague with learning disabilities

Creating a microsite and video to support the recruitment process

A group of 6 colleagues with learning disabilities worked with SCLD and Aspen to create the microsite on Aspen's website [SCLD - Chief Executive - Aspen People](#)

Two colleagues with learning disabilities supported the Chair of the Board to create a short video that would be used by Aspen People on their website.

Preparing for the 'Meet the candidates' session

Two further online workshops were held to develop the idea of a 'Meet the candidates' session. The idea of the 'Meet the Candidates' session was to create a two-way conversation where our colleagues with learning disabilities and a few family carers had a chance to find out a bit more about the candidates who had been shortlisted for interview.

It was important that this was a positive experience for the shortlisted candidates as well as our colleagues with learning disabilities and family carers.

A 'cafe' style conversation over a cup of coffee was agreed.

'Get to know you' questions were developed by the group. Time was taken to role play the questions and to ensure we left time for some free-flowing discussion.

Roles were agreed including who would welcome each candidate, who would ask each question, who would take notes.

Following the online workshops, the SCLD Team held one to one meetings with our colleagues with learning disabilities to check in and make sure that they were clear and comfortable with their roles, in the planned 'Meet the candidates' session'.

'Having the workshops before the 'Meet the Candidates' allowed us to know who we were working with, what was going to happen on the day, know our roles and practice with the role play. It was important to prepare.

Colleague with learning disabilities

Shortlisting

Two colleagues with learning disabilities volunteered to be involved in the shortlisting and to be part of the interview panel. It was important that the same two people were involved in the both the shortlisting and the interviews.

An initial meeting was held online to prepare for the shortlisting session.

A second full day meeting was held for the actual shortlisting.

The Board members created pen pictures of the candidates to support the shortlisting process.

A traffic light system was used to support the shortlisting of applicants.

'I was proud of myself and valued having the experience. It gave me confidence. And I was proud of SCLD.'

Colleague with learning disabilities

'The shortlisting was a big challenge and making the decisions about who we would interview was hard.'

Colleague with learning disabilities

The 'Meet the Candidates' session was held at an accessible venue which also had a Changing Places facility.

There were 3 tables arranged in separate spaces to ensure the candidates had privacy.

Each table had a scribe who captured the candidates' responses to the 'Get to Know You' questions.

Time was scheduled after meeting each candidate for the group to share their initial thoughts.

At the end of the session the 3 tables came together to share their feedback with the Board members.

'I've never experienced anything like this before. I can't believe how SCLD and people with learning disabilities have been able to make this happen. This helped to prepare me for the interview'.

Shortlisted candidate

'This was a powerful process. I was proud and it shows me that people with learning disabilities can work as a team, and we can get what we want and need in a new Chief Executive. Everyone should do this'.

Colleague with learning disabilities

The Interview

The interview panel was made up of 2 Board Members and 2 colleagues with learning disabilities.

The interviews were scheduled for a full day with comfort breaks after each interview and with time to discuss and record the merits of each candidate after each interview.

‘The process was all about the leadership of people with lived experience. It just wouldn’t have had half the value that it did have if that wasn’t the case. I cannot stress enough what a fantastic experience it was for me to be involved where people with lived experience were leading. It was superb.’

SCLD Trustee

Feedback Meeting

It was very important that we invited everyone who had been involved in the process to a feedback meeting.

The first thing was to say a very big thank you and to share the news with everyone that SCLD had appointed their new Chief Executive.

We wanted to remind people of the huge amount of work that they had done and what they had achieved and to celebrate the success of recruiting our next Chief Executive.

We wanted to know:

- What people had thought of the whole process?
- What did they think of the bits they were involved in?
- What had worked?
- Did you feel the information we gave you was accessible?
- Did you feel supported in the whole process?
- What we could do better next time?
- And ask the question ‘Would you do it again?’

'This is the best inclusive piece of work I have seen in 30 years!'

Family carer

'A truly inclusive process'

Colleague with learning disabilities

'Definitely for the future, whatever job comes up at SCLD, we should do this in the same way'.

Colleague with learning disabilities

SCLD's New Chief Executive

We asked SCLD's new Chief Executive, Dr Simon Webster, how the experience had been for him as a candidate.

'It's rare that you can enjoy an interview process, but the recruitment for SCLD's next Chief Executive was a great experience for me. At a first session I met with three groups of Trusted Advisors – people with learning disabilities – with supporters. I was asked three sets of serious and well-prepared questions over the course of about an hour. I could see that the Advisors in each group were carefully considering my responses. The second session was a more traditional interview, with two Trusted Advisors, along with the Chair and a Trustee from SCLD's Board. SCLD gave enough time and preparation for this interview to be as full and as testing as other interviews which I've had. And there were real responses and a few laughs!

What made the difference was the chance to meet with people with learning disabilities who are so invested in SCLD's work and its impact. This approach also allowed me to experience SCLD's values in practice, giving me a clear initial sense of the organisation, which candidates usually don't get through interviews. So, this approach confirmed to me that I was making the right move by seeking to work with SCLD and started a whole set of new working relationships which have helped me to move easily into my new role.'

Dr Simon Webster, Chief Executive, SCLD

Learning

1. Do not underestimate the time it takes plan, co-ordinate, and support people to be meaningfully included in the recruitment process.
2. Plan the human resources you need to support people with travel, preparation, at online and in-person meetings.
3. Plan the budget you need for meeting space, travel, accommodation, subsistence, and staff time.
4. Plan the time it takes to create accessible information in a few formats.
5. Next time split the shortlisting across 2 days. It was too much to do all in one day.
6. Don't forget that people get tired, consider the number of candidates. We found 4 candidates worked well.
7. At the first workshop talk about how hard it can be to decide between 2 excellent candidates.
8. Sometimes things change e.g., at the 'Meet the Candidates' session two people couldn't make it on the day. We had to move people from one group to another. This worked as they were able to keep the roles, they had in their previous groups but meant they were working with new people.
9. 'Would you do it again?' Everyone said yes, they would do it again!

Would you do it
again?

Yes
(everyone said yes!)