

Scottish Commission for
People with Learning Disabilities

Annual Review 2024-25

Evolving With Purpose



Introduction

Include For Good

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Partners,

We are proud to share SCLD's Annual Report for 2024/25 – a year of transition, achievement and innovation, grounded in our core values of respect, inclusion, collaboration, and pioneering spirit.

This year, we experienced a leadership shift, bidding farewell to our Chief Executive, Charlie McMillan, whose tireless commitment to inclusion, human rights, and strategic progress over the past five years, left a lasting legacy. Following a competitive recruitment process, we welcomed Dr Simon Webster as our new Chief Executive in October 2024. Simon decided to move on from SCLD in May 2025 and we were thankful for the insights and analysis he shared with us. We are most grateful to Linda Mitchell (our Head of Delivery) for her steady leadership as Acting Chief Executive throughout these periods of change.

While 2024/25 brought new challenges and opportunities, we remained focussed and determined. The delay in introducing a Bill into the Scottish Parliament that would advance the rights of people with learning disabilities was disappointing. However, we continue to collaborate with the Scottish Government and community partners to ensure the 'LDAN Bill' is ready for the next parliamentary session in 2026.

Throughout the year, SCLD remained committed to progress and to centring the voices of people with learning disabilities in all our work. In partnership with women with learning disabilities and People First, we developed the world's first gender-based violence audit tool. We continued to support our Rapporteur colleagues to lead the Include For Good programme, and we expanded our influence and reach in other sectors through new partnerships.

We are now laying the foundations for our new strategic direction – one that reflects the ambitions and resilience of the learning disability community, is informed by lived experience, and prioritises organisational sustainability.

As we move forward through an evolving and uncertain landscape, we remain confident in our ability to adapt, innovate and grow. Together with our partners, supporters and funders we will continue to work towards our vision of a fairer Scotland where people with learning disabilities live full, safe, loving and equal lives.

Thank you for being part of this journey.



Eddie McConnell,
Chair of SCLD

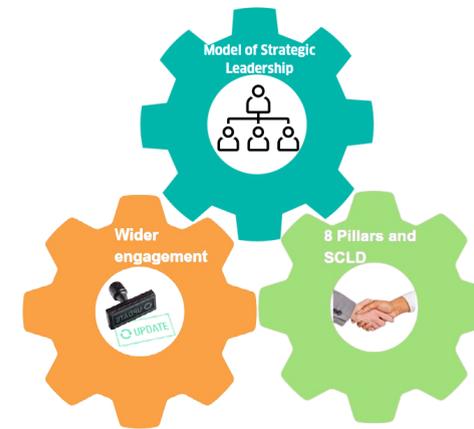


Linda Mitchell, Acting
Chief Executive of SCLD

Include For Good

Include For Good is all about changing attitudes and making Scotland a more equal place.

In 24/25 members of the team attended the Global Leadership Exchange (GLE) Conference in the Netherlands, spoke at Care Inspectorate events, and also met with the Scottish Government's Director of Mental Health, Stephen Gallagher, to discuss the impact of the LDAN Bill. Find out more [here](#).



Include For Good

Highlights

- 
June 2024: Rapporteur Rosie met Stephen Gallagher, Director of Mental Health at the Scottish Government, at the GLE Conference in Utrecht and invited him to meet with the Include For Good team

- 
October 2024: review of our 8 Pillars and agreeing next steps

- 
November 2024: meeting with Stephen Gallagher during Co-Production Week

- 
January 2025: we used the learning from all our recent reviews to think about what is next for Include For Good

- 
February 2025: our priorities for the year ahead were agreed and a plan put in place.



Rapporteur Interview

Include For Good is entirely co-produced. Here's what co-production means to the Rapporteurs.

What do you like about working in a co-produced way?

"I like it because I feel valued. When I have something to say and it is taken seriously, it counts. I always feel that I matter. People want to hear what I have to say and also value it." – **Natalie**

"I like how everyone gets to voice their own opinions and experiences in a discussion." – **Fraser**

How is this different to other projects you have been involved in that were not co-produced?

"I feel like I am not getting patronised. I feel like I am not just filling in gaps or just there to tick boxes." – **Sandy**

"It's about being part of a group and being listened to. The main difference is that we are included in the decision making." – **John G**

What difference has working in a co-produced way made to you?

"Working in a co-produced way with a CEO and Chair of the Board, we are learning by example." – **Kris**

"I am more confident at speaking up from the heart not what someone else thinks I need to help them with. And it's also my own words. I am not being set up with what to say." – **John K**

Include For Good



Policy and Rights

This year’s policy and rights work has covered a wide range of activity seeking to inform decision-making at all levels of government and at a UN level.

4 We responded to **four** Scottish Government consultations and parliamentary calls for views.

60 Our response to the Adults with Incapacity Amendment Act Consultation, highlighting the need for reform and resources to support decision making, was shaped by **two webinars** with over **sixty participants**. Read it [here](#).

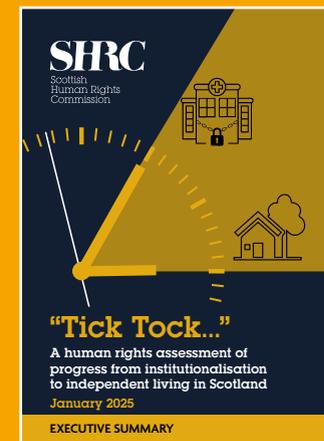


We published a discussion paper exploring legislative, cultural and practice perspectives informing Supported Decision Making in Scotland. Click to view.



We gave oral evidence at **four** Scottish Parliament Committee sessions including giving evidence to the Equality, Human Rights and Justice Committee on progress with the LDAN Bill. Click to view.

We submitted written evidence to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and were invited to give oral evidence on the barriers faced by people with learning disabilities in Scotland. We highlighted long-term institutionalisation without clinical need and called for sustainable health, care and housing solutions to support independent living. We welcomed the Committee’s recommendation to ensure access to adequate housing and later presented to the Cross Party Group for Learning Disability on the SHRC’s Tick Tock deinstitutionalisation report.



Our Networks

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)



The aim of the PBS Community of Practice is to develop best practice for those supporting people with learning disabilities. The PBS Community of Practice Scotland is delivered by SCLD on behalf of Scottish Government. For more information or to join visit: [Positive Behaviour Support \(PBS\) – SCLD](#)

PBS Community of Practice membership continues to grow with **600 members**

Highlights:

Understanding Positive Behaviour Support interactive learning resource

This innovative learning resource provides a comprehensive introduction to PBS for practitioners in health and social care who support people with learning disabilities. It will also be helpful for those working in education settings, and for family carers. This free and accessible online learning resource is the result of a collaboration between the Scottish Social Services Council and the PBS Community of Practice.



550 applications

223 submissions approved

79 applications pending

Webinar 27.3.25

PBS CoP Steering Group members delivered a webinar to the Ontario Government, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services on the work of the PBS CoP Scotland. **73 attendees.**



Restraint Reduction Scotland (RRS)

Restraint Reduction Scotland's aim is to eliminate the misuse of restrictive practices in Scotland and to ensure that where these are used, they are done so safely, with respect for people's human rights, and in a culture of openness and transparency. To join RRS please sign up [here](#).



169 members

Highlights:

- RRS membership continued to grow year on year: 112 people in 2023, 150 in 2024 and 181 in 2025.
- RRS' membership continued to broaden across sectors, with members mainly coming from Health (34%), Social Care (23%), learning disability and voluntary organisations (14%), and education and training (13%), along with members from national and local government, law and justice and other sectors.
- Restraint Reduction Scotland attended the UK Restraint Reduction network Annual Hybrid Conference.

Restraint Reduction Scotland Priorities

Leadership & Cultural Change

Workforce Development, Prevention & Practice Leadership

Monitoring Data & Evaluation

Housing and Independent Living Advisory Group (HILAG)

35 members

The HILAG meets quarterly and aims to promote a cross policy, partnership and evidence-based approach to help to protect, respect and fulfil the right to housing and independent living for people with learning disabilities.



The HILAG has supported the Coming Home agenda through highlighting at a national level the need for creative and person-centred, housing and support solutions for people at risk of institutional living.

The Housing for Complex Needs research project funded by SCLD and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Specialist Learning Disability Services, Horizon Housing Association, and Key Housing Association was published in March.

The HILAG will be working with stakeholders across Scotland to support the ICESCR recommendation to ensure access to adequate housing for people with learning disabilities in the community.

Request to [join](#) SCLD’s Housing and Independent Living Advisory Group and get housing policy updates.

Aims

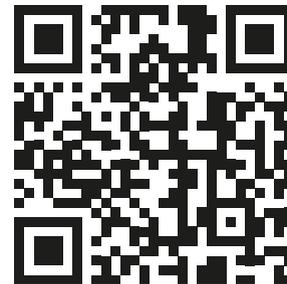
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|----------------------------|--|
| Promote and advance | Promote and advance the progressive realisation of the right to adequate housing and independent living. |
| Support | Support the implementation of the Coming Home agenda – highlighting creative, person-centred, housing and support solutions. |
| Advocate | Advocate for a more accessible and a rights-based approach to housing for people with learning disabilities. |
| Contribute | Contribute to a better understanding of the housing needs and preferences of people with learning disabilities in Scotland. |
| Amplify | Amplify the voice of people with learning disabilities, including people with complex needs and their families, and share housing stories. |

Delivering Equally Safe

SCLD and People First (Scotland)'s Equally Safe group co-produced the worlds first online gender-based violence and learning disability self-assessment toolkit called Equally Safe and Supported.

DELIVERING
EQUALLY SAFE

The **toolkit** includes a practical set of resources designed to support organisations to make their services more accessible to women with learning disabilities who have experienced gender-based violence.



“I have completed the toolkit, and I’m horrified that I had to answer ‘never’ to so many questions. I fully commit to making changes and to continue to review our progress”

(Equally Safe and Supported pilot participant, 2025)

Expert Group

In the last year the Expert Group has consulted with 7 organisations including Skills Development Scotland, Ardenglen Housing Association, UK Parliament, Senior Education and Engagement Outreach, Historic Environment Scotland and Social Security Scotland.

After consulting with the Expert Group, Skills Development Scotland returned and explained to the Group that the information they gave had led to improvements in the advice given to Skills Development Scotland staff via their intranet, on how to make their services more accessible to people with learning disabilities.

The Expert Group has contributed to SCLD’s work on the LDAN Bill, and given advice to a PhD student embarking on a doctorate on increasing access to music education.



Scottish Learning Disability Week 2024



380
total attendees



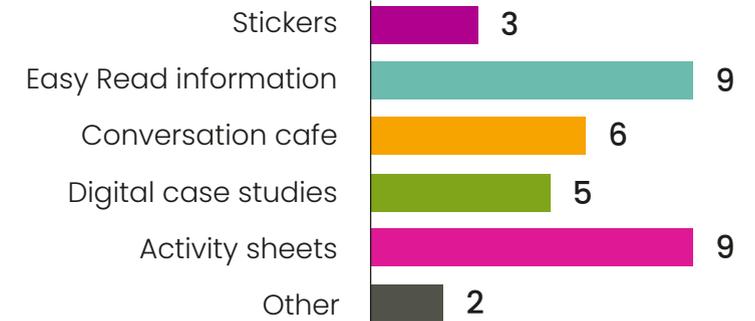
15
online events

Digital Inclusion



1,063
Get Involved Packs
distributed across Scotland

What was the best part of the Get Involved Pack?



Projects and Partnerships

Financial Security

Since 2023, SCLD has worked in partnership with the Fraser of Allander Institute looking at the financial situation of people with learning disabilities in Scotland.



The project provides a significant evidence base of the financial situation of people with learning disabilities, who are currently not visible in large scale surveys of the general population. The project spoke to **24** people with learning

disabilities, gathering in depth information about their income and spending, work, social care and social security.

The project has created a replicable methodology that can be used either to investigate this cohort longitudinally, or to understand the situation of other marginalised groups.

The [project reports](#) were published in March 2025 and launched with a webinar with **57** attendees.



On the back of the [‘Our right to be techy’](#) report, the Scottish Government’s Digital Health and Care Directorate awarded SCLD funding to test a local learning disability inclusion co-ordinator post, to improve digital inclusion and digital access for people with learning disabilities.



Using learning from Scottish Care’s Care Technologist project, SCLD is working in partnership with Scottish Care, North Ayrshire Learning Disability Service and Glasgow School of Art, to test a new role known as a Learning Disability Care

Connector. The Care Connector is working with a stakeholder group of **22** interested professionals across the third and public sector in North Ayrshire to understand the current situation, create an asset map and ultimately inform a piece of design work to be undertaken by interns from the Glasgow School of Art. The project aims to develop a replicable, design-led framework and accompanying resources to tackle digital exclusion in a sustainable and inclusive way, with the potential to deliver transformative outcomes not only for people with learning disabilities but also for other marginalised groups.



Our Future Leaders

INSPIRING SCOTLAND

Following the successful delivery of the original Our Future Leaders as an online course delivered by SCLD and Inspiring Scotland, the course has been re-designed (in collaboration with 6 course graduates) to be delivered a) in person and b) independently of SCLD and Inspiring Scotland. The new course includes new content focussing more on developing a growth mindset rather than learning specific skills. Course material was developed through 2024 and the new course was piloted Jan – March 2025. It was hosted by Upmo, a service provider in Edinburgh.



Impact

Here are some quotes from students:



“I have learned how to be independent - I want to help others do the same.”

“I am going to live my life to the fullest - watch out for a changed Matty!”

“I have never done anything like this!”

“I want everyone to do this course!”

“It has been life-changing”

“It is a safe place to talk”

Thank you

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our incredible supporters, dedicated volunteers, collaborative partners, and generous funders for their commitment.



Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities

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