

SIAA Response

The United Nations Convention on the rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) - Scottish Local Government Delivery Plan

5th November 2015

The Local Government Delivery Plan appears to be geared primarily towards people with physical disabilities and those with learning disabilities. The actions planned for these groups are to be welcomed however there is no reference to any adaptations or supports for people with mental health problems, autism or dementia.

For example the plans for transport focus on physical accessibility. Use of public transport can have issues for those with mental health problems and those with autism. Consideration should be given to this to ensure public transport meets the needs of as many people as possible.

This will also be of particular relevance for some more remote rural areas. Access to support services and social contact can be vital for anyone who is isolated and this is particularly the case for those with mental health problems. Limited availability of public transport in some areas can impact negatively on individuals' well-being.

The Delivery Plan also does not appear to take account of any issues around intersectionality and that people with disabilities will also have other identities and belong to specific groups such as those from BME groups, LGBTI or older people. Also they may have both physical and mental health issues or have complex need around other long term conditions. These individuals and groups face particular barriers within society including structural prejudice, discrimination and stigma and the delivery plan would benefit from reflecting that. These individuals and groups are also more likely to experience further health inequalities which also needs to be acknowledged.

Access to independent advocacy for disabled people will support the achievement of the aims laid out in the Delivery Plan. Independent advocacy aims to ensure that groups and individuals are included in their local communities, that their views are listened to and taken fully into account when decisions are made that will affect them, their lives and circumstances. Independent advocacy also ensures that people's rights are upheld and that they are fully informed and supported to make their own choices and understand potential consequences of those choices. Collective advocacy groups which are available in many areas of Scotland can support people with disabilities to take part in society, to engage in local democracy and to be fully involved in the formulation of legislation and policies and in local planning. Strategic advocacy planning should also ensure availability of collective as well as one to one advocacy. Independent advocacy organisations across Scotland work with individuals with mental health problems, with learning disabilities and, in some areas, people with physical disabilities. The delivery plan should include reference to robust planning for access to independent advocacy both for those with a statutory right under the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, i.e. those with mental disorder (mental health problem, learning disability, acquired brain injury or dementia), and also for those with physical disability.

The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA) is Scotland's national membership body for advocacy organisations. The SIAA promotes, supports and defends independent advocacy in Scotland. It aims to ensure that independent advocacy is available to any person who needs it in Scotland.

SIAA is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation Charity number SC033576 –
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