

Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee

Disability Commissioner (Scotland) Bill

Engagement with Glasgow Disability Alliance – 10 September 2024

Young people's table

The idea of a Disability Commissioner

- Young disabled people support the idea, but with a degree of scepticism as they don't want more false hope or empty promises
- Other commissions/ers have not been effective enough. The Disability Commissioner must have actual powers to bring about change
- Important that a Commissioner is politically neutral; they should be there to represent disabled people without an agenda
- They should at least have an insight into working with disabled people. Maybe it would be good for the Commissioner to be disabled
- Important to represent ALL disabled people and understand the diversity of disabled people across the whole country. This includes "hidden disabilities".
- Will need a support team/specialists to be able to respond to queries and act quickly to deliver what disabled people need when they need it
- Don't presume the location of their office. Why not Glasgow instead of Edinburgh? But important to have other 'branches' across Scotland
- Don't want any appointment process to be rushed. Need to take time to identify suitable contact. Maybe DPOs and disabled people should be involved in that process. Important that they have a track record of getting things done.

Communication

- The individual should make the time to be visible
- Important that they communicate with disabled people on a regular basis (perhaps monthly) and that they use fully inclusive and accessible methods of communicating
- Must be easily contactable and demonstrate that they care about our views and concerns.
- Funding and budget will be important.

Involvement of disabled people

- Important to involve disabled people in Commissioner's work
- Inclusion, not exclusion
- Could keep disabled people involved and up-to-date with regular newsletters/emails/texts
- Should get "out and about" too. Hold regular events and activities, using diverse and accessible methods. Make sure attendees have an outline of the theme for events in advance
- Will need proper budget to involve disabled people, to factor in travel, accessibility, venue, PAs, taxis. Should meet everyone's needs, not one size fits all

- As mentioned earlier, would be good to involve disabled people in the selection process.

Barriers

- Difficult to get any helpful action from anyone who should, for example, local authorities
- Getting to and from places, like for appointments, can be expensive.
- Young disabled people have additional barriers particularly when it comes to the transition from school to college/further education
- Accessibility and appropriateness of provision for young disabled people is bad, preventing them from furthering their education
- Any adjustments often have to be taken on and pushed by the individual, costing time, energy and money. Very demoralising
- There needs to be much better allocation of funding to support young disabled people through this transition.