**United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (CRDP) Consultation**

**Introduction**

We had three attendees at the event - a larger number of people had registered but did not actually attend the event. Those that did not attend were invited to feed back their thoughts directly to Inclusion London via the website.

We used the Easy Read presentation format as it was the most accessible for our participants. We added some slides to the presentation to talk about what our Government had not done well on since the 2017 report as a way of promoting discussion. The subject that we covered are detailed below.

**Benefit assessments (PIP in particular)**

Attendees felt that the Government and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had little understanding of their needs, health condition and situation. This leads to having little or no understanding of the condition so people wondered how the assessor can make the correct decision about the support a disabled person needs. They felt they were not believed when they asked for help (PIP assessments and social care assessments). They felt like criminals and a fraud. Assessors had not read the forms already submitted so did not know the full extent of their medical conditions and asked invasive and inappropriate questions that left them feeling embarrassed and depressed about their personal situations.

Attendees felt it is too difficult to get any help and support and that they had to ‘jump through many hoops’ and it shouldn’t be that difficult. They felt it was deliberately designed to put disabled people off applying for benefits / social care or other support because it is so difficult, many disabled people give up as they cannot ’fight’ anymore or suffer with their mental health because of the assessment. Legal Aid and Advocacy was taken away, attendees felt this was done with the intent to stop disabled people appealing decisions and complaining.

Quotes from disabled people.

“There are so many bureaucracies that you must go through to get any help. Do they think you are in a wheelchair for a laugh. I was asked if I could walk 50 metres, I am visually impaired so how do I know how far that is”.

“My autism is a hidden condition that they do not see or understand so therefore I must be fine. After 30 years the Government and DWP should know about Autism and how it effects people”.

“It’s all about the ‘Ching Ching’ (money), not people!”

“All we need to know is, can you clean yourself”

“It’s always been an ideology not to assist disabled people. That’s what the Government really think of us. Legal Aid was taken away from us to challenge decisions”.

**Society’s view on disabled people**

The Government and MP’s put negative ideas in non-disabled people’s mind about disabled people, through their comments and attitudes. These ideas then form how people feel about disabled people. They think we are all scroungers, that we could work if we wanted to, that we must not be a good person and we are a burden on the state. This allows the Government to continue to do the things they do to disabled people, to cut services and benefits.

Quotes

“My own friend said to me, I know you’re not like that but others are”. Meaning disabled people are scroungers and on the take.

**Accessing social care**

The experiences attendees shared of using Social Care were not good. The Local Authority outsource the service to care agencies and it was felt that they did not give the adequate care to disabled people. The care providers, it was felt, did not take the disabled persons needs or requests into consideration when appointing carers. No fixed time was given for carers to attend which left disabled people in need and unable to plan their day accordingly. When contacted by disabled people, the Local Authority appeared ‘not to care’ by saying there was nothing they could do to help.

**Quotes**

“Despite requesting a woman carer to help me wash, I would sometimes be sent a man. Some carers would not help me shower and I could hear them rummaging around in my personal belongings which was very upsetting. I do not feel I could apply for care again in the future if I needed it”.

**The impact of Covid on Disabled People**

Health appointments were hit and miss. Many routine check-ups and blood tests were cancelled. This put disabled peoples care and health at risk and continues to do so. It was felt it is difficult to get an appointment with a GP and receive quality care. GP receptionists were felt not understand people’s health conditions but repeatedly asks them to call back as there are no appointments available, eventually people ‘give up’ trying which could have huge implications on their health and wellbeing.

NHS / GP practice communication throughout the pandemic was poor and disabled people felt forgotten. This continues to be an issue even as we emerge from the pandemic. As practices merge and hospitals grow, the communication between departments is poor which can impact the care that disabled people can get.

**Quotes**

“I have to sit in a call queue for a long time when I call and then I might not get an appointment”.

“The receptionist is abrupt with me and not sympathetic to my needs”.

“At the bottom of the online form it says, If you hadn’t been able to use this form, would you have given up? This tells me they are aware people just give up”.

**Conclusion**

Overall, disabled people did not feel that the Government had made much clear progress on the Convention rights and did not feel confident for the future.

Attendees did note that he COVID pandemic has created some opportunities such as remote meetings and remote working which might benefit some disabled people, but there are also some very serious impacts that disabled people have experienced such as worsening mental health, worsening physical health due to the disruption to NHS provision, and loss informal support networks.

Everyone felt that it was a really interesting and important discussion to have, and we encouraged attendees to continue to engage with the discussion going forward.