**Inclusion London**

**UNCRDP workshop notes**

**55 people registered for the event and 33 attended.**

The event started with presentation about UNCRDP and the shadow reporting process.

Participants then worked in small groups reflecting on the progress on specific issues.

**Independent living**

* Situation got worse, less funding for local authorities, who cut support for people. Local authorities also misuse the money given to them. Increased charges and disproportionate impact on women, who often are forced to give up care to be able to keep a bit more money for everyday costs and end up having to rely on partners or random acquaintances which puts them at much greater risk of abuse and dependency.
* Money is spent on very expensive institutions, where people’s basic human rights are violated, for example young people with autism are kept in solitary confinement. Money is also spent on putting children of disabled parents in institutions, rather than giving parents little extra help.
* People on direct payments have very little control over their support. Most are forced to use agencies.
* Crises with care workers, made much worse by Brexit and Covid also pushed people to look for other jobs.
* The narrative which we went back to is Disabled people are vulnerable, not equal. Need looking after as can’t look after themselves. Social car3e is viewed in this way and it leads to decisions made for us. We went back 25 years.
* So much has become about, you know, number crunching, it hasn't become about meeting people's needs.
* The government refused to accept that abuse by non-family members, so personal assistants, care workers et cetera, was actually a form of domestic abuse. I mean they have offered us a review of abusive of disabled people at home, but it feels like a real sop, you know, to push the issue off and they refuse to include that in the Domestic Abuse Bill, that's actually quite a major, major issue.
* there is a thing in the Domestic Abuse Act, not the new one, but the previous one, which basically says that an abuser, we call it the 'carers' defence, you can say that you are making decisions and controlling somebody because it's in their best interests. It's a best interest clause. It's a very dangerous one. We tried to get it removed, abrogated, we failed and the government said it's needed to protect people, it's not, it's giving a licence to abusers.
* The number of disclosures of abuse in institutional settings has been on the rise and the number of disabled people, including younger disabled people, including women and again there is no data so it's difficult to work it out, the amount of abuse of disabled people in residential care in institutions is increasing. Some homes where people were abused got an excellent rating from CQC.
* The purpose of social care to support us to live an equal life to others. Localk authorities thinking it is ok tom provide little support as long as all those who need it are treated equality, but it is not about equal to other non-disabled people.
* Levels of support are so minimal, that it is impossible to live a normal life,, it is about keeping clean, fed and safe.
* Paternalistic and dictating approach from professionals, we know what’s best for you. You have to take it.
* **I think independent living is not independent living anymore, it's let's make sure that people don't die on our watch and hope for the best that other people can pick up the care and support to support that person to live an independent life. I'll shut up now!**
* Street space changes make it much harder for visually impaired people to get outside their house and be safe.
* Systemic racism' in the Council system and the benefits system, which actually I don't know if you were going to expand more Kelechi, but just to put it out there.
* No recourse to public funds and difficulties getting medication, treatments, help as a disabled asylum seeker. No agency takes responsibility, all put barriers. You are pushed on the streets which exposes to abuse.

**Employment**

A2W is unfit for purpose – not sufficiently resourced, rationing, standard of equipment is subpar, doesn’t cover implementation of equipment/service, very slow and bureaucratic

Exploitation of disabled people – disabled people not renumerated for expertise/experience they give to organisations looking to consult on disability issues. Especially statutory bodies who have a PSED.

Lots of organisations have great DEI policies but don’t actually implement them

Lots of disabled people end up in work but they aren’t properly supported – government schemes to boost numbers into work not actually addressing the issues in the workplace

Limited help available in finding work, job advertisements and recruitment schemes are often inaccessible and uninclusive

Health and right to life

* Very little progress re UN recommendations or wider issues.
* There is a mental health NHS taskforce set up looking at increasing staff skills and it is focusing on intersections of race, disability and mental distress . This is good
* Evidence and research that women still being pressurized to have an abortion where there is a chance of fetus having an impairment. This is especially so with Disabled women and women of colour
* Experiences of extremely inaccessible maternity services where staff and facilities pre and post natal just did not know even in the most basic way to support disabled women or meet their access needs. There is specialist support for example if you have diabetes but nothing for Disabled women.
* Pandemic provoked a wave of mass DNR notices all focused on care homes plus NICE guidelines about who could and could not get priority access to A&E were deeply ablist
* 6 out of 10 covid deaths are Disabled people
* Access to health were always structurally bad and inaccessible but this has got a lot worse:

1. Treatments/health services not accessible including cancer treatment
2. Steep reduction in quality and provision of health services
3. Access to many health services moving online eg GP services which excludes many older and Disabled people – very problematic

* Community support services to people in mental distress now appalling and has gotten much worse – no expertise or any services offered in community

**Equality and accessibility**

In England during the COVID announcements, there were no accessible communication options but this was an option in Scotland and they were ready. The government doesn’t consider the needs of Deaf of HoH people during the times they are giving out very important info during COVID.

Local government didn’t provide reasonable adjustment for BB holders for the LTA zones and there was no exemption for carers. Benefits to air quality has been minimal compared to the Disabled people

Problem with getting accessible information for people with learning difficulties and also autistic people. They are receiving information not in Easy Read or simple language without language. That excludes these people completely. Coronavirus update from the Bristol council after two years for Easy Read but it’s not automatically done on every council thing. Man with severe autism received a letter (6 pages long), so full of jargon that Val wasn’t able to get through it. Val could understand why the autistic man couldn’t. The council knew that the information was going to an autistic person/

Links referred to: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/motors/16718246/labour-ulez-blue-badge-disabled-drivers-london/> <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/231894/london-pollution-improved-with-evidence-small/>

Around 14 million Disabled folks only 9% of new homes are accessible. It is not a legal requirement for new homes to be fully accessible, it is just optional. LA’s can decide whether or not to include them in housing plans. Fell 32% (2019) – 29% (2020) the system we have right now isn’t going to provide accessible homes that are needed. We need a good baseline for homes to be accessible.

Hybrid working is making it more accessible for SOME Disabled people but not. But there is a rising level of digital exclusion as more and more products, services and government initiatives are going online and more and more disabled people will be left. Public services (and then private, as well) should have physical and digital audit to make sure that it is accessible

London Development Plan all councils should be building accessible homes but this is not happening. The houses are not meeting accessibility standards and the social housing sector is a complete mess, there is more of a focus on profit over people. The pavements are not suitable and inaccessible as places in Merton (and likely other places in London)

Coronavirus Act (easements) just mitigated against the risk for LAs so they didn’t need to provide care for Disabled people, when during a global pandemic, they should be providing more care, not less.

**Right to liberty and equal recognition before the law**

Plans to reform MHA which remain non-compliant with UNCRDP do not represent radical reform. We will not have legal capacity recognised, contrary to article 12. That's for two reasons. One is that people who in the unfortunate capacity system our judged to have capacity, can't turn down detention, they can express scum choice about hospital dreamed but even then, the clinician can overrule them there's a further breach of Article 12 if people are judged to not have capacity they won't get even that amount of weight given to their wishes. And the fact that although yet again we're told that detentions will go down, which actually sound very sceptical about, they just don't, the fact that detention can still happen is a serious breach of Article 14, and what's even more concerning the intersectional issues relating to either of those have not been addressed. Unless they have been addressed there will be a continuing trend. People from racialised communities are still overrepresented. It's also very concerning that issues for other marginalised groups just are not adequately addressed at all, it's well‑known that women are traumatised by being detained and giving compulsory treatment, that had just not been addressed. Similarly older people who are treated particularly badly are not represented, and you could go on. So under COVID, it's true to say that the intention extend the powers so that anyone person needed to say that someone had to be detained whenever implemented, what is hugely concerning is that there was a significant rise in deaths among detained patients and people on community treatment orders, so in that sense as well it was really concerning and I will stop there because I know that other people really want to get in, but you know it really is sort of worrying.

The pandemic demonstrated how much gap there is in terms of quality of care, provision online, people are excluded, level of isolation, poor access to services makes things worse.

Little support for young people going to adult services. Transition not managed

Housing is big issue. Accessible, affordable, good quality. There isn’t.

Many parents have language barrier, meaning interventions delayed, and parents can’t access or dismissed, not listened to. Quality of interpreters not good. Lack of cultural understanding or empathy.

Deprivation of liberty is used in family court against young mothers or pregnant women they used to stop them going home to their families.

There is not adequate housing and support for disabled mothers and teenagers they deprive of liberty so don’t have to house them in registered accommodation.

Fear of people contacting services and being sectioned.

If you are a disabled mother, and have a disabled child they will use child protection against you, blamed as unfit mothers. Process actually damages mental health of mothers. Secrecy of family court and social services.

What is needed?

Full compliance with article 14 and 19. Resources go to community resources of all sorts. Things can’t change unless people can live ordinary life in community. Benefits system is part of that.

Supporting parents of disabled children, language is barrier to get access to support.

**Access to Justice**

* Met Police is training police officers on supporting victims of abuse, but disabled people are not included, despite the fact that disabled women are at higher risk.
* Cuts to legal aid, the threshold is so low. People cannot afford challenging in court even when they good case. Advise deserts and how difficult it is to get any legal advice. Have to call so many solicitor firms and they all don’t have capacity to take on a case.
* No enough access to intermediaries. No automatic ways to ensure disabled person can accurately give information and supported. Automatically triggered referral when achieving getting evidence phase. Police don’t know when intermediary is needed. Training.
* How police treats disabled victims. Especially when it comes to sexual violence and domestic abuse, culture of disbelief, often implying that “this can’t happen to you”.
* 2% of courts are accessible. Police stations are not accessible. Easy read info is not automatically available.
* If the is a threat to property or life the police interview a Deaf person without an interpreter.
* Access to advice, law centre ques.
* Pressure put on victims to provide evidence, instead of duty of police officers to investigate.
* Disabled victims are not believed. Even the language police officers are using so demanding. One client said police officer told him to shut up and listen I front of the perpetrator.
* Even to flag as disability hate crime is very difficult. Survivors saying that police officers imply that no one would do something like this to the victim.
* Difficulties with adjustments in court proceedings.

**Right to Political, Social and Cultural Life**

Access to Elected Office Fund – no funding for anyone of any political affiliation for selection processes. Particularly hard if running for selection somewhere that somewhere doesn’t live – target seats etc. Needs reinstating permanently.

As a candidate do Disability Related Costs be declared as part of candidate expenses? Not clear in legislation. Could be spent on direct election materials for the campaign.

All disability shortlists – not currently permitted under EA10, but under 1% of current MPs are disabled. How would they work in practice.

Need for resources for Las to make access to elected office better – polling stations, election materials, participation in debates

Parties need to support engagement – all parties need a central pot of funding, e.g. BSL interpreters

Need more disabled MPs so we don’t have to ask non-disabled people to speak on our behalf in the corridors of power.

Elections bill – govt planning to devolve responsibility to LA level to assist visually impaired people to vote

Proportional representation for disabled people to address lack of disabled representation

Need for hybrid participation for disabled parliamentarians and counsellors. Need for reasonable adjustments generally for disabled MPs – examples of Jared O’Mara and Marsha de Cordova

Income and social security support

* Cost of living increases not reflected in benefits
* No uplift for legacy disability benefits
* Move to UC represents a cut in financial support especially if you are living on your own,have disabled children
* UC waiting time rules plus conditionality and sanctions having huge negative impact
* Cuts to ESA
* All evidence points to Disabled people in deeper and more persistent poverty
* LA’s have had 60% of cut in funding and not getting better
* LAs don’t have money to run essential services like vital housing repairs – all impact on Disabled people
* LA social care charging taking way what little income Disabled people have
* Most additional central govt funding not ring fenced or discretionary and its not used on social care eg Greenwich scandal
* Poverty level benefit levels disproportionately affect Disabled women
* Disabled people with ‘No recourse to public funds’ are being made destitute and pushed in abusive situations like prostitution with no escape because abuse provides food or shelter that people can’t get from state.
* Disabled people with ‘No recourse to public funds’ also have no choice over where they get housing and are often moved to inaccessible housing with no networks nearby

Standard of living to me I think should be defined as a person had food, basic things and things that will enable a disabled to adapt to their situation, or each circumstances. So I don't think that that has been met because yes I know the Government can provide everything for us, I think that from the benefit we get we can't use it because the Government gives money is to be able to give, have a real standard of living that can help us manage our situation but instead we keep paying it up, we use it for pay for social care. When we pay for social care, how much will we have to be able to have the standard of living that we should have for disability. So they should use that measure because that has not been, according to the convention, that has not been used. It's not been done.

**Torture, Violence, Abuse**

* Abuse because of lack of support.
* Institutional racism and disablism in police, not believing, not investigating, not recording. People who are victims of victims end up being targeted by the system. System does not value us as equal human beings.
* Family not always supports activism and this may expose to abuse.
* Not listened to.
* People with autism and learning disabilities are abused and this is hidden. Detention, forced treatment, experiences of hate crime, they are just not taken seriously. The Mental Health White Paper is focused on protecting others from harm that we can cause or protecting us from the harm we can cause to ourselves, but no recognition that the risk of us experience harm from others is so much greater, than the risk of us causing harm.
* Violence that women suffer in hospital, the level of sexual violence, for example, or retraumatising, retraumatisation, being held forcibly brings up violence against you as a woman. People with racialised, from racialised communities do particularly badly because of all the stereotypes of things like, "Big, black and dangerous", and similarly there is a complete absence of focus of what happens to older people in hospital.
* we need recognition at the detention and forced treatment are a form of abuse. You know. Yet it's authorised in the mental Health Act and planned Mental Health Act White Paper and new Bill, I tried to keep it quick, because we haven't got much time.
* The government's violence against women and girls strategy, despite our best efforts and some, totally, botched engagement exercise, subject of a legal letter, they basically haven't taken on boards the issue for disabled survivors of any form of violence against women and girls, they just refer back to the Disability Strategy which refers back to the violence against women strategy. So there is nothing. We try to get them to look at violence against disabled women in institutional settings, whether that's hospitals or residential care or whatever. They have just ignored it completely. So, I think there is, there is a major structural issue about this, which needs taking up with the UN. Police action, in terms of everything from hate crime, to other forms of violence against disabled people they're not even bothering to investigate. We have got a whole number of cases where they are just not investigating including ones where we have got evidence and we have supplied to the police and they have closed the case for lack of evidence and disabled people are not seen as credible witnesses in spite of guidance issued by the CPS way back after a legal case. There is some very basic things that have got considerably worse, and in London the Metropolitan Police have completely stopped engaging with us, in terms of, you know, they no longer have a hate crime Board, MOPAC no longer has a hate crime Board, the Met no longer has Diamond Group, which allowed us basically to be able to kind of call them to account, so the accountability has gone out of the window as well. We have also had a situation where the Met Police are now running a pilot, which we know will get extended London-wide, where if a victim of domestic violence, when the police turns up say, "I don't want to pursue this", they drop the case and don't even do anything, even though there might be evidence against the perpetrator and just refer her to an IDDVA service where there is now a waiting list, we know the mainstream services don't work for disabled survivors and BAME survivors lots of issues and structurally it's getting worse. In terms of the issues about tasers, the use of tasers seems to have increased. It particularly being used against people with mental health issues and there was a case in Newham of a young black woman with learning difficulties, who was restrained and tasered by the police. She got lost and the levels of violence that were used against that young woman are atrocious. Just on a really grim one, sorry, but the words of disabled women are very often not seen as violence against women and girls, or even as domestic abuse, they are subject to -- institutionally violence against disabled people is just being written off the agenda, I think it's something, that we need to emphasise.
* I have quite a lot of intersections. The intersex community, that is people born somewhere between male and female haven't been very kind to me because of my neurodivergent, dyslexia, visual impairment and often it's been about, you know, the concept of inspirational porn, I can't aspire to the accolades and sensationalism. I watched a hate crime documentary where someone with learning difficulties and mental health was tasered by the police and with all the stuff going on at the moment about the Bill about women's rights I encourage disabled women to, to be involved with that Green Paper because, as disabled women, also can be subject to street harassment and all that kind of stuff and one final point is that even though going to special school and in the care profession it tends to be dominated, even in the third sector, tends to have a huge proportion of women but sadly women never at the top and sadly women not talking about women's issues because even though in the third sector, for example, period poverty, disability, birth rights know, things like FGM and breast ironing and the honour-based system and all these different topics that intersects. advocates for people, we often have our voices drown by those big charities that have loads and loads of money who like to talk about us, but rarely include us.

**Right to family life**

Married with two daughters and has two grandchildren. Born with a disability and over the years it has gotten worse, diagnosed at 28 and is currently 74 was told by consultant that the disability will gravely incapacitate them but hopefully not kill them. Knows of a mother with muscular dystrophy and had 3 young children and was so frightened that they would be taken away because she was a wheelchair user and her children were young. The help came from volunteers and their peer group, but it should have come from the local authority but she didn’t have the help to enable her to be able to do the physical activities needed for caregiving, but she wanted to be present for the things that she could do even though she needed help. Through the help of friends she was able to do certain things with her kids, but it came from an informal source (friends, volunteers) but not from where it should have come from, LAs etc. Now the children are grown but if it wasn’t for these volunteers it wouldn’t have happened

Disabled Mother’s Campaign (Winvisible) – Social services and family court. Has a lot of mothers and when the mother tries to access adult social services for their needs

Section 17 – Children’s Act: a disabled child and disabled parent can stay in their community and can get funding to support for this. 🡨 Often breached by the government

Child Protection Services – Funding steadily increases

Disable parents/mothers are reported to CPS and dragged through family court and being put into care and being adopted by others. Standards are INCREDIBLY high for Disabled mothers compared to non-Disabled mothers.

Mother & Baby Unit – are often inaccessible (no lifts etc), awful story of a wheelchair using mother was told to get up and walk otherwise their child will get adopted by someone else. And that did end up happening.

Family courts are held in secret and behind closed doors so there is a lot of abuse is happening under the guise of ‘being in the interest of the child’, but this is never in the best interest of the child. Autistic women often have autistic children and

Since 2017 to now it has gotten 10x worse

**Other points**

The Equality Act does not work, it is left to us to enforce it and we are not able to.

Transition to adulthood, huge problems.

Pandemic: like myself who live on their own, no immediate family, and you know we served because of austerity then and we have served even more because of lockdown, pandemic, there was no £20 uplift for us, there was just Universal Credit, and also, our human rights were violated in the fact that DNRs were slapped on people, the vulnerable people that ended up in in intensive care because of COVID. How the Government has failed yet again, and what we can do as DGO to highlight failures, these continuing failures. They have not been put right from the last lot, they have only got worse, our human rights have disintegrated even further.

The Coronavirus Act is just an excuse for services to be cut further, and for our human rights to be violated even further. The pandemic although it's a real pandemic, it was used as an excuse to further Des decimate human rights and disabled people's rights in particular.