

Summary

Services for who? Changing attitudes of service designers and deliverers which underpin discrimination experienced by disabled people with other protected characteristics

About the DRILL Programme

DRILL (Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning) was an innovative 5 year, UK wide programme led by disabled people, for disabled people and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Launched in 2015, the programme was managed by a partnership of Disability Action Northern Ireland, Disability Rights UK, Disability Wales and Inclusion Scotland.

The aim of the programme was to build better evidence about approaches which enable disabled people to achieve independent living. The findings from the projects it funded can be used to inform future provision across a wide range of policy areas, and give a greater voice to disabled people in decisions which affect them.

This is one of a series of summaries of the project supported by DRILL. Final reports, toolkits and summaries of all the projects are available from the DRILL website at www.drilluk.org.uk.

Overview of this project

This project explored the experiences of disabled people who have other protected characteristics when accessing services.

Approach

The project recruited co-researchers from across Scotland at the start of the project. They worked together to develop the research methodology.

A survey was distributed to gather information about disabled people's experience of intersectional discrimination when accessing services. It received ninety-six responses. Thirteen interviews were also carried out with disabled people from across Scotland and four service providers.

An online focus group was also held with members of the co-production group. It was open for 2 weeks to allow members to contribute their ideas on recommendations.

Findings

Some disabled people attributed the unfair treatment they experienced when accessing services to their intersectional identities.

Disabled people with other protected characteristics were not listened to by professionals, they were not given access to information they were entitled to and had to contend with inaccessible systems and processes.

They experienced denial of choice, control and person-centred services. The participants felt that this denial was very much linked to their intersectional identities.

Much of the treatment experience by participants was underpinned by negative attitudes and assumptions. There seemed to be a lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of service providers. However, this was sometimes used as an excuse to avoid having to deal with some disabled people.

These negative attitudes and assumptions reveal a potentially deep-seated prejudice towards disabled people with other protected characteristics.

Service providers seemed unfamiliar with the term intersectionality. They were aware of the importance of person-centred services, including an awareness of the need to consider the whole person.

Findings (continued)

There is an awareness that service providers work in challenging environments where they are often constrained by issues such as low budgets, issues with staff and recruitment and reputational risks.

Services seem to acknowledge the need to tackle issues around staff attitudes and assumptions. However, the extent to which this is possible in their challenging environments and using the existing service processes is limited.

Only once negative attitudes towards disabled people are effectively challenged and eliminated will services be able to be genuinely inclusive of all disabled people.

Recommendations

The project outlined many recommendations, some of which are listed here. All recommendations are included in the full report, which is linked below.

- The Scottish Minister for Older People and Equalities should gather evidence about negative views towards disabled people, how these are formed and more effective ways of challenging them
- Ensure data is routinely collected across all protected characteristics and that intersectional analysis is undertaken and published. Use this to inform policy development and service design
- Take an intersectional approach to equality impact assessments to ensure that they accurately reflect the reality of disabled people's lives
- Provide staff with equality training which is underpinned by intersectionality and a person-centred approach and is designed and delivered by people who use the service, including disabled people
- Involve a range of disabled people in designing services through co-production, ensuring they are meaningfully involved at every stage of the process
- Services must actively provide disabled service users with information about their entitlements
- The Scottish Government should ensure all services are sufficiently funded
- Organisations involved in research and data collection should promote and/or undertake further research on intersectional issues.

Final report

[Services for who? Changing attitudes of service designers and deliverers which underpin discrimination experienced by disabled people with other protected characteristics](#)

Please click on report name to read full report.

Project partners

Inclusion Scotland

