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Disability Research on
Independent Living & Learning

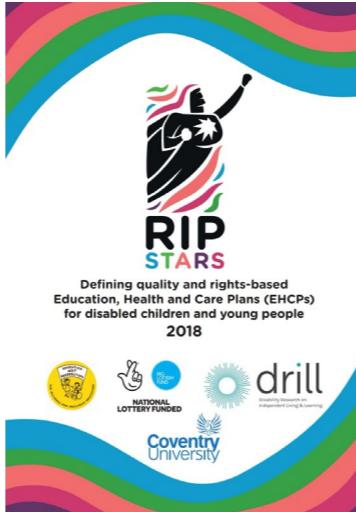
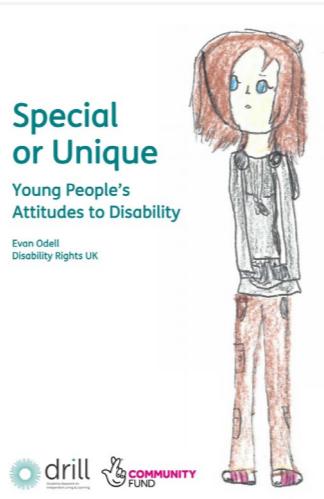


DRILL Programme: **Impact Report**

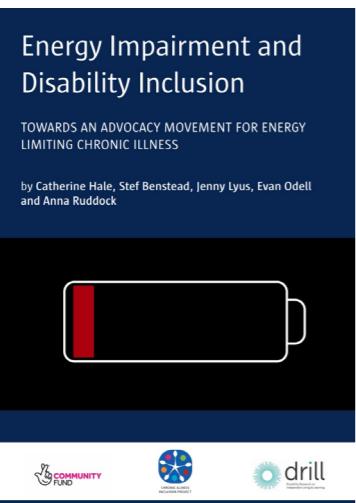
Executive Summary

Services for Who?

The experiences of disabled people with other characteristics when accessing services
2020



Working with Peer Researchers
Developing Future Strategies

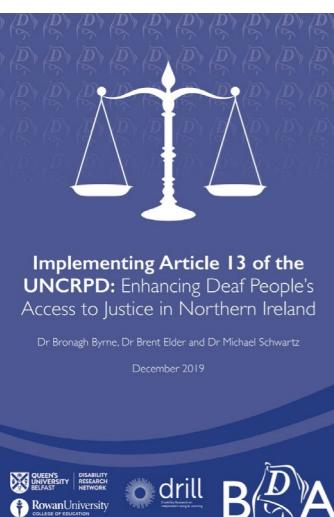


Tackling Violence
Against
Disabled Women & Girls

A Toolkit for Social Care, Housing, Mental Health and Safeguarding Services 2019



Funded by Big Lottery Fund through DRILL (Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning) Fast Track



The Bridge Project
Interim research findings - April 2019



Introduction and Background

This document is an executive summary of the evaluation impact report for Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning (DRILL), a programme funded by The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) under the Research for Impact: Disabled People funding programme. DRILL was managed and delivered by a Four Nation Partnership of Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs). Project partners include:



DISABILITY ACTION works to ensure that people with disabilities attain their full rights as citizens, by supporting inclusion, influencing Government policy and changing attitudes in partnership with disabled people. Disability Action is the lead partner and delivers DRILL in Northern Ireland.



DISABILITY RIGHTS UK disabled people leading change, working to create a society where everyone with lived experience of disability or health conditions can participate equally as full citizens. It delivers DRILL in England.



DISABILITY WALES championing the rights, equality and independent living of all disabled people regardless of physical or sensory impairment, learning difficulty or mental health condition. They recognise that disabled people have many identities and can face intersectional discrimination. Disability Wales delivers DRILL in Wales.



INCLUSION SCOTLAND is a consortium of organisations of disabled people and disabled individuals. Through a process of structured development, they aim to draw attention to the physical, social, economic, cultural and attitudinal barriers that affect our everyday lives as disabled people in Scotland. Inclusion Scotland delivers DRILL in Scotland.



DRILL Programme Outcomes

Four outcomes were identified for DRILL by the partners:

- Disabled people have increased knowledge about key issues and new evidence of what works, enabling them to live independently and fulfil their potential.
- Positive influence on policy making and service provision in relation to supporting disabled people to live independently, through the availability of robust set of research findings.
- Disabled people experience improved wellbeing, independent living, choice and control through participating in or engaging with DRILL.
- Disabled people are empowered and have directly influenced decisions about services that affect them.

TNLCF Research for Impact: Disabled People

The Research for Impact: Disabled People (RFI: Disabled People) programme was developed by TNLCF in recognition of the distinct lack of evidence available from the perspective of disabled people about how they could be enabled to live independently and make their voices heard.

The overall programme aim is:

To build better evidence about approaches to enable disabled people to live independently, which is used to inform future policy and service provision, as well as give a greater voice to disabled people in decisions which affect them.

The programme had a budget of £5 million. Following an open application call, TNLCF issued a letter of offer to Disability Action and project partners to deliver the DRILL Programme across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



DRILL Programme Structure

Several structures were established to assist with the management and oversight of the programme, as well as ensuring the integrity and quality of programme outputs, these are as follows:

DRILL Programme Board (DPB)	<p>Key decision making structure within the Programme.</p> <p>Representation on the DPB from the Chief Executive or equivalent from each partner organisation. Met on a regular basis throughout the programme.</p>
National Advisory Groups (NAGs)	<p>A NAG was established for each nation. Their remit was to support the development and delivery of DRILL. This included scoring applications and making funding recommendations to the CRC as well as providing general advice across different elements of DRILL. Met on a quarterly basis.</p>
Central Research Committee (CRC)	<p>11 person structure established to have final decision on projects to be funded following recommendations from each NAG. The CRC provided oversight and supported the development of DRILL overall. Met bi annually.</p>
Ethics Committee	<p>Established with a team of mainly disabled academics to provide ethical guidance and approval to those projects that did not have access to a university ethics committee. Met around three times a year.</p>

Evaluation Process

Disability Action on behalf of the DRILL partners commissioned S3 Solutions to complete an independent evaluation of DRILL.

Data Collection

The report has been informed by the following:

- Contributions from 31 funded projects were received through quarterly and final project monitoring forms as well as 14 semi structured interviews carried out by telephone.
- Contributions from 34 representatives of the NAG, CRC and Ethics Committees were received through online survey and semi structured interviews.
- Contributions from all DRILL Programme Board members through semi structured interviews at interim and final evaluation.
- Observations and structured literature review of articles, blogs, web based discussions and interviews that were carried out by projects and their participants.
- High level review of the research findings and reports produced by projects.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was conducted using both thematic and narrative approaches. Data from monitoring forms, semi structured interviews and surveys was cross tabulated in order to identify emergent themes and issues and to explore the relationships between issues. The researchers adopted an inductive approach, focused on wide ranging engagements with key stakeholders to build an abstraction and describe the key concepts relating to independent living, co-production, changes to policy and wider experiences of the DRILL programme.

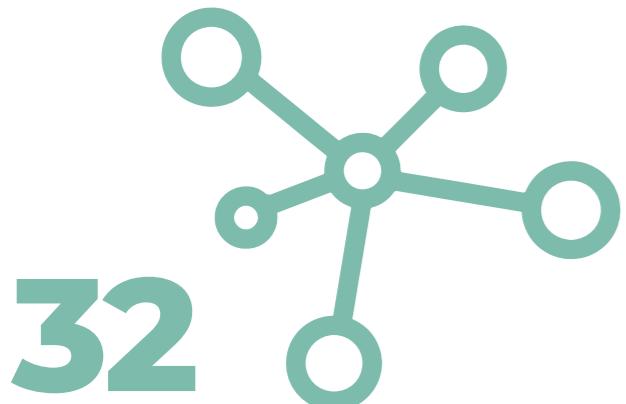
DRILL Delivery

Presented is a summary of the key outputs delivered within DRILL. A descriptive summary of the various application processes and relevant data is outlined in Section 3 of the full report.

DRILL Applications: Key Facts



Number of people that participated in road show events promoting DRILL at the outset



Number of research and pilot projects funded



Total number of applications received across Fast Track, Call 1 and 2



Total funding request from the application processes

£2,985,371

Total amount of funding distributed for research and pilot projects

DRILL Impact

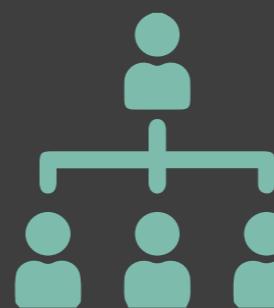
Headline Findings

4,856

Total number of people that participated in DRILL projects

313

Disabled people completing leadership roles within projects



85

organisations were involved in projects as partners

76%

of projects indicated that DRILL has helped them to attract new service users or people who want to work with their organisation

62%

of projects indicated that DRILL has helped them to develop new or refine current services

76% | 38%

of projects indicated that DRILL has helped them to secure new funding

£310,000

Estimated in kind contribution to deliver projects

'There is such a sense of feeling valued and feeling heard being part of research like this'
PROJECT PARTICIPANT

22 of 32 projects have had at least 5 disabled people in a leadership role. Leadership roles included: staff members, researchers, peer researchers, volunteers and steering group members

'We have noticed a huge amount of personal development within the research team; with 2 peer researchers gaining further research employment, and at least 3 wanting to explore research roles further'
PROJECT REPRESENTATIVE

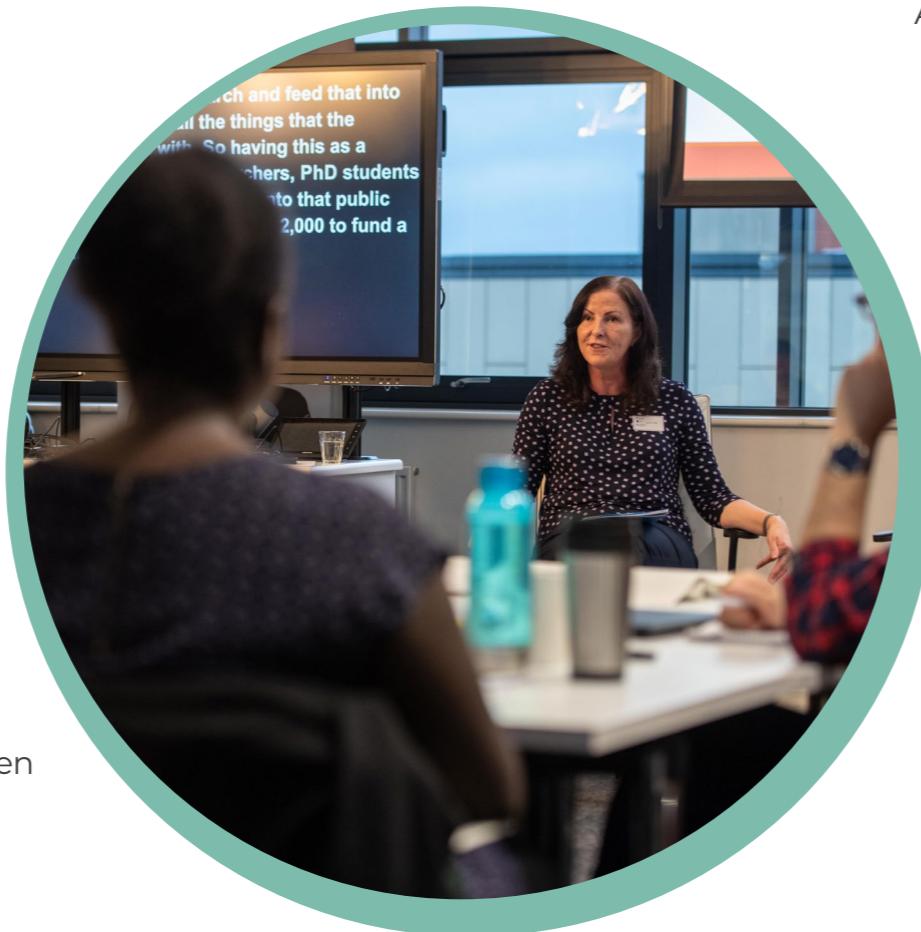
DRILL Programme Reflections

The DPB, NAGs, CRC and Ethics Committee structures performed important roles in the development and delivery of DRILL. These structures comprised cross sectoral representation including statutory/government, DPOs, academia and the community & voluntary sector. Consultation exercises were carried out with representatives at interim and final evaluation stage. The findings in this section includes:

- Contributions from 34 NAG, CRC and Ethics Committee members via semi structured interview and fourteen responses to an end of project survey.
- Six semi structured interviews with DPB members and programme staff.
- Contributions from project lead partners via semi structured interviews and from project monitoring forms.

A thematic analysis was carried out under the following key headings:

- 1 Impact for disabled people
- 2 Co-production
- 3 Impact on policy
- 4 Impact on practice
- 5 Partnership working
- 6 Sharing of research findings and learning
- 7 Process and management considerations
- 8 Future priorities



Summary of Key Findings

A number of key summary points from the consultation are set out below:

- The level of interest in the application process is considered a key success. The demand and interest in the programme helps to demonstrate its relevance, and the capacity to fund 32 projects with high optimism about their impact is an important achievement.
- DRILL has created a rich and diverse portfolio of quality research and evidence based work about approaches to independent living which aligns with the original aim and intention of the programme.
- DRILL has demonstrated that co-production works and that disabled people are the experts on their own impairments. It also indicates that investing in and committing to quality co-production can generate impacts in terms of feeling valued, empowered and improved confidence.
- DRILL was a new programme that created new structures. There are many lessons to be drawn from DRILL. Learning includes a better understanding as to how co-production works in theory vs practice, the importance of investing time and energy to build strong partnerships and in relation to research, the importance of sharing and dissemination.
- The prominence of co-production across all aspects of DRILL was championed by the Four Nation partnership, it is questionable whether an alternative delivery model would have achieved the same level of commitment and buy in to co-production.
- DRILL has highlighted that working in partnership is challenging, but it can lead to innovation, imaginative working and can develop skills in resourcefulness. Significant time and resources are required to invest in partnerships if they are to be successful. This should be factored into future work.
- There is a lot more work to do to realise the impact of DRILL, to change attitudes, influence policy and change practice. There is a requirement for a legacy project to DRILL which will require additional investment, resources and commitment to work in partnership across the Four Nations.

Analysis and Key Learning

Impact for Disabled People

Overall, 4,856 contributed to or participated in DRILL research and pilot projects, with 313 disabled people performing in leadership roles within projects. This is a significant level of participation and engagement.

The evaluation report has identified a clear causal relationship between the allocation of funds by the DRILL partners and the delivery of research and pilot projects across the UK which have embraced and embedded co-production at their core. This has resulted in considerable impacts for disabled people.

From qualitative feedback, participants have indicated that leading the development and delivery of research and being asked for their views on a topic that resonates deeply with them, in a meaningful way, has been a positive and empowering experience. These are positive outcomes although do not offer conclusive evidence about changes to independent living.

For the 313 disabled people that contributed to the projects in leadership roles, further outcomes and impacts were reported. New employment positions were secured, personal development outcomes were realised, experiences were shared with people of influence, confidence increased and disabled people felt empowered and valued. These are all outcomes that have been attributed to their involvement in a DRILL funded project. This has been communicated in some powerful and impactful personal stories and testimonies from participants.

Evidence from the consultation suggests that in most cases, this would not have been achieved in the absence of the investment or to a much lesser extent.

Impact on Policy and Practice

Impact on Policy

From the evaluation process, few clear or direct policy changes of significance have been achieved from DRILL or its funded projects as yet. However, the availability of research has now provided a platform for a period of extensive lobbying and engagement

around the findings and evidence base generated by the 32 projects. This is a common view amongst all stakeholders involved in DRILL.

The feedback from projects also suggests that they feel more confident in their ability to lobby for change. The challenge, acknowledged in feedback from DPB, NAG, CRC and Ethics Committee representatives is how this lobbying, information sharing and dissemination is taken forward in a strategic manner as the DRILL programme ends. Whilst individual organisations lobbying for change may achieve some success on individual topics, it is unlikely that transformative changes in policy aligned to DRILL research findings will be achieved at UK government and across regional governments without clear strategic focus and direction.

On reflection, it was a difficult challenge for DRILL to deliver any tangible policy change during the lifetime of the programme but that a more realistic measurement will be the change achieved in the 2-3 years post programme. Project teams have documented some individual successes in terms of accessing new networks, politicians and policy makers. This highlights the potential to convert future engagements into policy change.

One potential area of opportunity is the change of government policy in relation to public sector intervention and investment as a result of COVID-19, with greater intervention in the economy, investment in health and social care services being a feature throughout 2020. Whilst UK and devolved government approaches may change as the pandemic progresses, it is likely that significant levels of public investment will continue in the future as opposed to a return to austerity measures. New investment and the search for new ways of working by government agencies present an opportunity to share and promote findings from DRILL and individual projects.



Impact on Practice

The impact of the programme on practice largely reflects that of policy impact. Whilst individual organisations have indicated that they will change their own practice or have influenced a change in practice in specific locations, organisations or services at a local level, DRILL has not delivered a widespread change in practice at this point. Individual examples of organisation changes in practice were noted in feedback from projects. One example of innovation within DRILL and an area for future sharing and learning in relation to practice in completing research relates to the Ethics Committee.

Co-production

Key learning from the DRILL approach to co-production was that to do it right takes time, resources, patience and investment from all those involved but particularly in the approach to managing a project. This is particularly important for projects led by academic institutions, community and voluntary organisations and non DPO's.

Issues will arise in terms of ensuring accessibility to material and meetings, incorporating different views and perspectives and managing time aligned with project milestones. Whilst many of these challenges are practical or logistical in nature, it is important they are considered in future projects. These challenges, if not addressed, have the potential to impact on the level of buy in to co-production and fidelity to co-production.

From the consultation, academics involved in projects and structures such as NAGs, CRC and Ethics Committee have recognised the importance of co-produced research and the value of having disabled informing all stages of research. There are testimonies from those involved in DRILL projects outlining how they will continue to embed this practice in future work and in some cases focus on new research projects that allow for co-production in design and delivery.

Partnership Working

Key learning points in relation to partnership working from DRILL include:

- Take more time to understand partner organisations, how they work and internal processes that they have in place. This will allow for a more realistic allocation of resources and timeline for delivery.

- Partnership development is important, allow appropriate time for this and the completion of initial activities to establish the partnership.
- Allocate sufficient resources and time for partnership working, map this out against activities but also allow contingency for unforeseen issues. In relation to research this can include ethical approval, payment processes, reporting processes and partnership arrangements.

These learning points resonate for both funders and organisations seeking to deliver projects. For funders, it is important that expectations of projects in terms of outcomes, outputs, resources and timescales are balanced against the level of partnership working they want groups to demonstrate and the value they place on partnership working.

For organisations, it is important that partnerships are not seen as a convenience to secure funding but rather viewed as a critical tool to add value and enhance their project. The DRILL Programme Team and partners have accrued lots of practical learning in relation to partnership working that can be shared with DPOs and academics for future reference. These should be collated and developed into resources for other projects in the future.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Concluding thoughts on the programme are structured on the original evaluation questions as set out in the terms of reference.

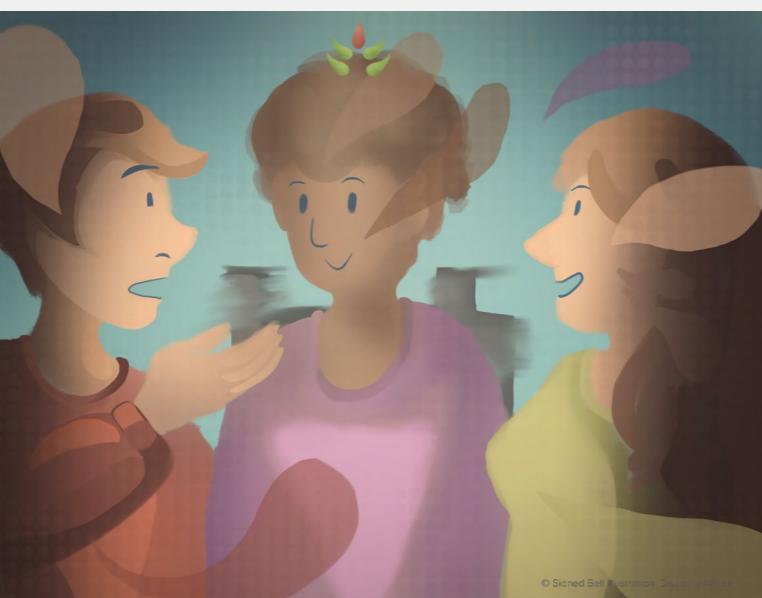
1. To what extent has the DRILL Programme achieved its intended outcomes and what contribution has it made to the Research for Impact outcomes?

Reflecting on the findings, 4,856 disabled people participated in projects with 313 of these in leadership positions, a portfolio of 35 pieces of research was produced across the spectrum of independent living for disabled people and high levels of involvement of disabled people in co-producing this research was achieved. It is the view of the evaluator that DRILL has delivered against the overarching aim and intended outcomes of the RfI programme. However, it is acknowledged that more work is required to influence how the learning and research is used to inform future policy and service provision for disabled people.

2. What are the legacy and the sustainable benefits / impact of the DRILL Programme?

The legacy and the potential sustainable benefits from DRILL are centred on:

- The availability of a portfolio of research that can be used as a platform for change – this is an evidence base and resource that can be used for future post programme lobbying, engagement and influencing around policy and practice.
- Co-production and partnership working – the learning across the disability sector and academia in terms of co-production and partnership working can have lasting benefit in terms of how future research with disabled people is conducted. DRILL has proven the value of both in the context of research. Furthermore, there are many lessons in terms of the approach, time and resources required to adequately plan and deliver co-produced research.



These are significant areas of benefit and learning that can be sustained as a legacy of DRILL.

3. To what extent or reach has the DRILL Programme achieved in relation to influencing policy and / or practice?

The influence of DRILL on policy and practice has been limited during the lifetime of its delivery. However, findings suggest that:

- DRILL has increased levels of confidence and has empowered organisations to influence change.
- There are many positive examples of new networks established, new connections made, new conversations started with decision makers and new opportunities to share the learning and findings from research.
- Disabled people are now 'in the room' and 'at the table' with policy makers and influencers and thus created an impetus and momentum to facilitate meaningful policy change.
- A portfolio of research and evidence has been created which would not have otherwise been available to individual organisations or the wider disability sector.

At this point in the programme, these findings, whilst positive and demonstrating the 'potential' to generate change, have not translated into any widespread change in policies or practice. The evaluator does not feel that this should be regarded as a failure of DRILL but rather an acknowledgement that this type of change will require additional time, energy and resources to achieve.

DRILL has created the conditions for significant change in policy and practice to be realised in the future, alleviating a major barrier for DPOs and academics by creating an evidence base that otherwise would not be available.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following are taken forward to build on the impact of DRILL:

- Creation of toolkits and guides on co-production and partnership working based on the learning from DRILL.
- Strategic influencing and engagement activities, using the portfolio of research as a resource and using the collective voice of the four partner organisations and individual projects to lobby key decision makers and politicians.
- Creation of an accessible online resource to archive research projects and all associated documents and resources produced post-delivery of projects.

It is acknowledged that these activities cannot be advanced without additional resources and therefore it is recommended that every effort is made by the DRILL partners to secure additional resources in line with these recommended areas of work.



