Welcome!

UK: still a world leader in disability equality?

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• Who do we mean by Disabled people?
• Historic exclusion and discrimination Disabled people face
• Impact of the Disabled peoples rights movement and the social model of disability
• Where we are now after 10 years of austerity and welfare reform
• Lessons to learn and share
• Reclaiming Our Future
Disabled people?

By using the term Disabled people, we mean:

- people with physical impairments
- people with visual impairments
- Deaf people
- people with hearing impairments
- people with learning difficulties
- people with mental health issues
- people with long term health conditions
- people who are neuro diverse
- people with hidden impairments
Historic exclusion and discrimination...

- Treated as ‘other’, feared, pitied or viewed as of less value
- Socially, culturally and economically excluded
- Institutionalised
- Little choice or control
- Poverty, deprivation, poorer outcomes
The Medical Model

- Can’t talk
- Can’t hear
- Mentally ill
- Less intelligent

Problem

- Wheelchair bound
- Special needs
- Can’t see
- Can’t walk
Disability – The Medical Model

- Disability is about having something ‘wrong’ with you.
- Disabled people have ‘special needs’ as a result e.g. need day centers, ‘special schools’ and ‘special’ transport.
- Disability is primarily a private issue for the individual.
- Right response to disability is by trying to cure the individual or through pity, charity and sympathy.
The lives Disabled people lead are inevitable consequences of having something ‘wrong’ with you.
The Social Model

Disabling World

Life Opportunities
Segregation
Negative Media
Prejudiced Attitudes
Employment
Building Design
Transport
Civil Rights
Education

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The Social Model

- Economic, social, physical, communication & attitudinal barriers prevent Disabled people from participating fully in society.
- It is society that disables people with impairments. Disabled people have a problem because of discrimination and loss of human rights.
- Disability is created by society.
- Right response to disability is to change society: to end discrimination, remove barriers and create inclusion & equality.
The Social Model

The Social Model is about change.

- Discrimination is not inevitable.
- Barriers can be removed: information, communication, access, the law, housing, employment, attitudes.
- Disabled people must be leading the change.

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What is the difference between impairment and disability?

**Impairment:** an injury, illness, or inherited condition that causes or is likely to cause a loss or difference in the way the body or mind works.

**Disability:** is the name for discrimination based on impairment. It is the loss, limitation or restriction of opportunities and rights for people with impairments, to take part in society on an equal basis with others.
The term “Disabled people” is a political term people with impairments use to emphasize the social cause and nature of the exclusion and discrimination people with impairments face. People with impairments are disabled by society.

“People with disabilities” in contrast implies wrongly that disability is the same as a person's impairment. Disabled people reject this view. It is the disabling barriers operating in society that disables us, not our impairments.

So we say “Disabled people” not “people with disabilities”
A brief history of the Disabled people’s rights movement

A journey from workhouse to workplace, from institution to independent living, from charity to human rights
A brief history of the Disabled people’s rights movement

From institutions & charity to independent living, self determination & rights...

1972 Paul Hunt writes a letter to The Guardian newspaper calling for equality for Disabled people. His letter inspires the start of a united struggle against discrimination.

1974 Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) is formed and moves the focus away from welfare towards rights. UPIAS is the first to articulate the social model of disability.

Early 80s The first UK Centres for Independent Living (CILs) established in Hampshire, Derbyshire and Greenwich.

1981 British Council of Disabled People (BCODP) is established as an umbrella body that supports and encourages the development of hundreds of new organisations controlled by Disabled people across the UK during the 1980s.

1980-90s: People First, Equalities National Council, Regard .. DPOs across the UK
A brief history of the Disabled people’s rights movement

1993  CAT and “Block Telethon“ actions lead to the new Disabled people’s Disability Action Network (DAN) carrying out over 100 protest actions in the next 5 years

1996  BCODP establishes the National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) to promote independent living

2008  Inclusion London established

2010  Disabled People Against Cuts set up

2011  Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance of grassroots DDPOs and campaign groups is set up

2011  DDPOs & campaigners organise 100’s of protest actions against austerity

2016  UN Disability committee find the UK government has carried out grave and systematic violations of Disabled peoples rights
A brief history of the Disabled people’s rights movement

Key legislative milestones:

1995  Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)
1996  The Community Care (Direct Payments) Act which creates direct payments.
2000  Disability Rights Commission (DRC) established.
2005  The Prime Ministers Strategy Unit publishes its report, Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People, setting out recommendations for achieving disabled peoples equality by 2025.
2007  The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities opens for signature.
2010  The Equality Act: combining all key anti discrimination acts including the DDA
A “Human Catastrophe”

Where we are now after 10 years of austerity and welfare reform?
Disabled people are experiencing increasing levels of inequality, poverty, exclusion, prejudice and discrimination.

Things are getting worse not better for Disabled people.
Welfare reform:

Inaccurate / poor quality assessments:

- On-going cuts to benefits: ESA, PIP, Bedroom tax, UC
- Sanctions & conditionality: 24.7% of JSA recipients sanctioned were Disabled people
• A treadmill of punitive assessments
• Cumulative loss of essential income

Impact:
suicide, mental health problems, poverty & isolation= “grave & systematic violations of Disabled peoples Human Rights”
Independent living / social care

- Massive cuts
- Tightening of eligibility criteria to exclude all but those in critical need
  - “Clean or feed” levels of support
  - Re-institutionalisation
We are witnessing the end of independent living..

This means the end of inclusion, equality, choice and control for Disabled people who need support and assistance.
Inclusive Education

There has been a decline in Disabled children and young people accessing mainstream education & they are disproportionately represented in the Fixed Term & Permanent exclusions from Early Years settings and schools
• Disabled people are still routinely denied equal access to goods, services, opportunities and information
• Disabled people are less likely than others to perceive that they can influence local decisions.
• Disabled people have consistently lower rates of access and participation in culture, leisure and sport activities
• Inaccessible public transport
• Lack of accessible housing
Access to justice:

Changes to legal aid have significantly reduced Disabled people’s access to justice. The number of debt, employment and welfare benefits advice cases fell by over 99% since changes to legal aid under LASPO came into force.

54% drop in employment tribunal claims on grounds of disability discrimination between 2012/13 and 2015/16.
The EHRC have concluded:
“disabled people facing more barriers and falling further behind”
“It is a badge of shame on our society that millions of disabled people in Britain are still not being treated as equal citizens and continue to be denied the everyday rights non-disabled people take for granted”
The EHRC: Interim report on the impact of tax and welfare reforms between 2010-17:

• policy decisions taken between 2010 and 2017 are regressive.
• reforms will actually boost the incomes of the top fifth of those surveyed, while substantially reducing those in the bottom half.
Households with one or more disabled members will be significantly more adversely impacted than those with no disabled members. On average, tax and benefit changes on families with a disabled adult will reduce their income by about £2,500 per year; if the family also includes a disabled child, the impact will be over £5,500 per year. This compares to a reduction of about £1,000 on non-disabled families.
At the end of 2016... the United Nations published a report which found reliable evidence of grave and systematic violations of Disabled people’s rights by the UK government due to welfare reform.

At the end of 2017:.. UN Disability Committee’s Concluding Observations.
Lessons we are learning....

• Be strong, fearless and robust in voicing needs and issues
• Direct action and grassroots campaigning works!
• Wider links with anti-austerity and Human rights organisations and campaigns
  • Not to let our concepts and approaches be appropriated
• Struggle is on-going & progress is never guaranteed
Reclaiming Our Future

• Awareness / profile of Social care issues
  • Role of the state
• Role of investment in our infrastructure
• Keep up the momentum using campaigning, influencing, direct action and legal action
  • Nothing about us without us