



Women with learning disabilities' experiences of collaboration and co-production

Too often services are designed by people who don't have direct experience of what it's like to need or use them.

Rarely are services designed by, or with women with lived experience of learning disabilities and gender-based violence. Instead, decisions are frequently made *for* them, not *with* them.

By using a collaborative approach to designing services, you can make positive change happen *with* women with learning disabilities, instead of *to* them.

By having a say in what is needed, women with learning disabilities can truly play a part in how decisions are made. This type of collaboration can support you to design services that effectively meet the needs of all women.

Despite the abuses and challenges they face, victims/survivors with learning disabilities exemplify resilience every day. They do this by:

- ▶ welcoming opportunities for collaborative work that champions and defends their human rights and creates change
- ▶ taking their experiences of abuse and using them to stand up for not only their own human rights but those of all women with learning disabilities.

Examples of human right activism by women with learning disabilities include:

- ▶ sharing their experiences in public forums
- ▶ taking part in campaigns
- ▶ raising issues independently, and collectively with complaints bodies and the Scottish Government.

"I've sent ones [emails] to child protection telling them what I think, I've sent one to the Government, I have sent one to Nicola Sturgeon. Basically, voicing my opinion about it all."

– Woman with a learning disability, SCLD, 2023



“It was a campaign, and it was a photographer that came to my local women’s group... They are quite powerful [the pictures]...It was a good campaign. It could go on billboards and things like that...it was good doing that.”

– *Woman with a learning disability, SCLD, 2023*