Deafblind Scotland

Deafblind Scotland is a membership organisation serving 700 deafblind people across Scotland. The Board of Directors, in accordance with the Articles of Association, must comprise 50% of those who are themselves deafblind.

This is a low incidence disability whose needs are very specialised, and for whom the only hope of inclusion is if government, local authorities and organisations make the special arrangements necessary to include them in society in any meaningful way. The current preference – and rightly so – for inclusive communication is simply not enough to meet these specialised needs.

Their overwhelming need is for support with communication, access to information and mobility often in the form of a guide/communicator. They often have no need for “care”.

These needs are not adequately covered in any self-assessment questionnaire we have thus far been made aware of.

Previously their needs were met, financially, from a range of sources, including the BSL interpreting budget. But with the advent of Supporting People funding in 2003 they often were transferred to “care” funding sources. However in the “care” triangle of need communication is not even mentioned.

We are concerned that they will have little access to SDS funding in whatever form and feel that somewhere in the legislation arrangements need to be put in place to recognise that a small group of people don’t have difficulties with communication but simply don’t have communication at all except in the form of a Hands on British Sign Language, Visual Frame Signing, or Deafblind Manual.

Deafblind Scotland

26 April 2012