

Cross-Party Group on Learning Disability



Minutes of the meeting

Where: Scottish Parliament & Zoom

Date: Wednesday 18 June 2025

Time: 1 pm to 2.30 pm

Produced by Enable
Cross-Party Group Secretariat

People who were there

MSPs

Paul O'Kane MSP - Convener

Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP (zoom)

Members:

Gary Airnes - Enable

Hollie Reynolds - Enable

Craig Bryce - Enable

Heidi Keyser - Enable

Stuart Clarke - FAIR

Amy Bailey - The Scottish Assembly

Sandy Cruickshank

Chirsty McFadyen - Fraser of Allander

Sonya Bewsher - The Scottish Assembly

William Rae - The Scottish Assembly

Michael Baker - Have Your Say

Gayle Forsyth - Have Your Say

Sean Grubb - The Action Group

Louise Allan - Edinburgh Napier Uni

People who were there

Lisa O'Leary - Edinburgh Napier Uni

Greig Skeffington - Equal Say Advocacy

Maureen Martin

Frances MacDonald - EDGE

Jordan Allan - Thera (Scotland)

Sonia Shokar - Thera (Scotland)

Colin Menabney - Enable Glasgow

Sally Elfverson - Enable Glasgow

James McNab - People First (Scotland)

Caroline Kingston - People First (Scotland)

Sophie Orton - Artlink Edinburgh &

Lothians

Selena Begley MBE - Family Fund (online)

People who could not make it to the meeting and sent their apologies

MSPs:

- Stephanie Callaghan MSP
- Oliver Mundell MSP
- Gillian McKay MSP
- *Jackie Ballie MSP (?)*

If you are aware of any missing information, please contact us:
cp@enable.org.uk

We know that not all names were captured at the meeting and apologise for any missing information.

We had issues collecting zoom names due to some technical issues on the day. We can collect them and add them when we next meet.



1. Welcome and apologies

Paul O'Kane MSP welcomed everyone attending in the room and online. No formal apologies were noted in the room.

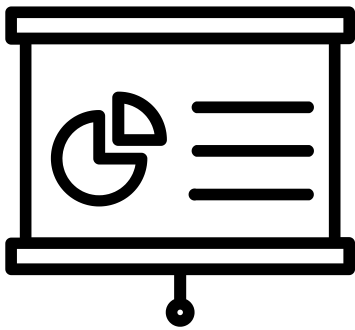


2. Minutes and Matters Arising from last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting in March 2025 were proposed by Michael Baker and seconded by Sally Ann Elferson.

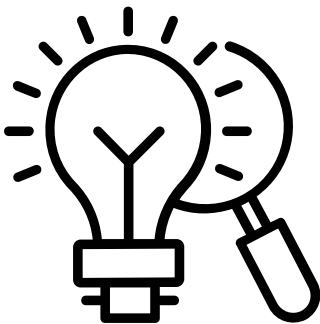


UNIVERSITY of STRATHCLYDE
**FRASER OF ALLANDER
INSTITUTE**



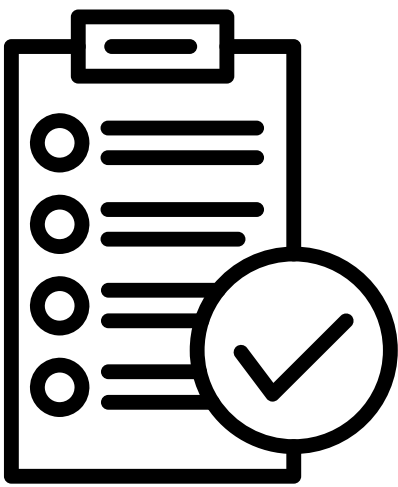
3. Fraser of Allander Institute: Learning Disability Research Update

Christy McFadyen from the Fraser of Allander Institute presented on their new research programme:



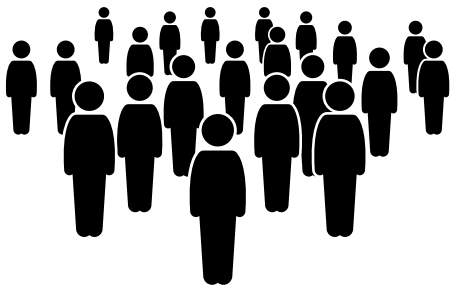
**Leading Good Lives –
Achieving Fulfilment,
Independence and Inclusion.**

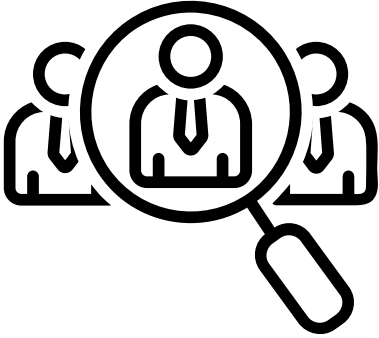
3. Fraser of Allander Institute: Learning Disability Research Update



Key points:

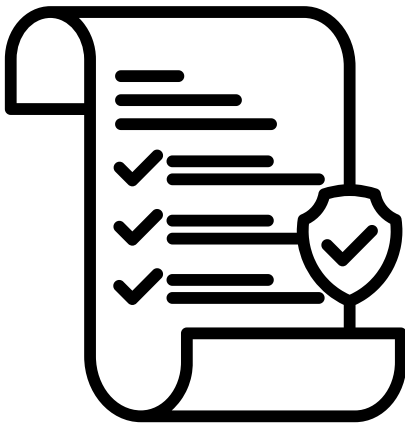
- The programme builds on two years of past work and aims to turn evidence into **actionable change**.
- The focus now includes people with **learning difficulties and developmental disorders**, using definitions from Scotland's Census 2022.





3. Fraser of Allander Institute: Learning Disability Research Update

Four Key Priorities of the research are:



1. Employment Policy Review

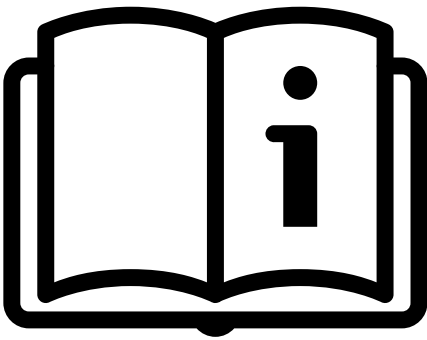
- Map current employment programmes and incentives.
- Evaluate what's working and what's not.
- Identify lessons to inform future policy



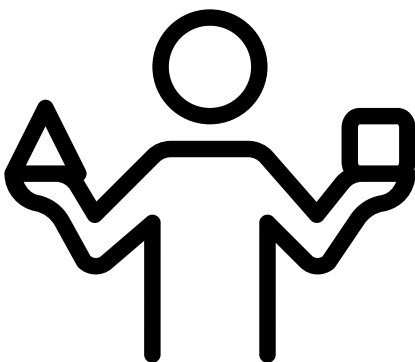
3. Fraser of Allander Institute: Learning Disability Research Update



2. Social Security and Financial Stability

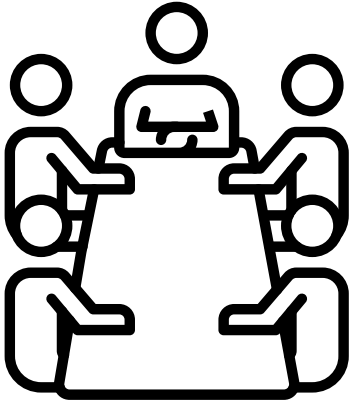


- Develop clear and accessible benefits guidance focused on employment.
- Collect insights from families, support groups and employers.



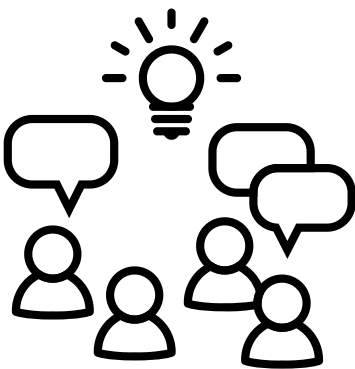
- Look at Ireland's disability allowance model and lessons for Scotland.
- Integrate lived experience and financial insecurity research to shape policy.

3. Fraser of Allander Institute: Learning Disability Research Update



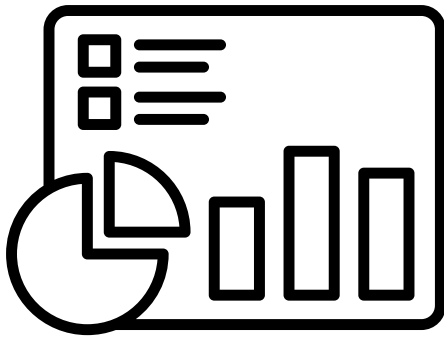
3. Employer Resources and Pilot Programme

- Create a steering group with stakeholders.
- Partner with the **Institute of Directors** to survey SMEs across Scotland
- Develop employer resources and deliver "**Getting it Right**" workshops.
- Design or evaluate a pilot employer training programme.

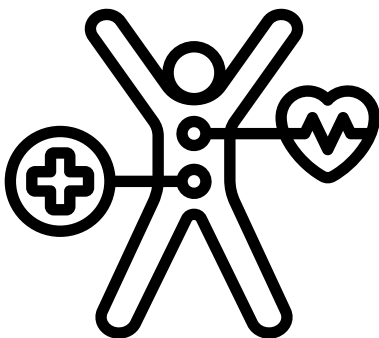


3. Fraser of Allander Institute: Learning Disability Research Update

4. Strengthening the Evidence Base



- Support the return of **Learning Disability Statistics Scotland (LDSS)**.



- Monitor **health check uptake, delayed discharges, and out-of-area placements**.
- Provide regular updates on key statistics and data through FOA's site.



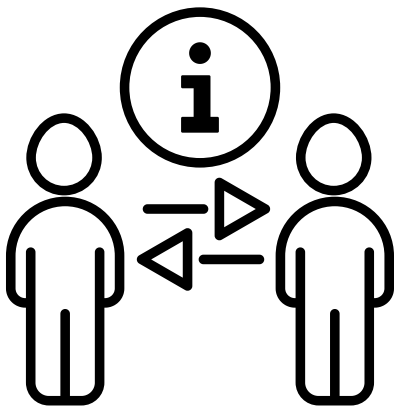
- Advance digital and data innovations in partnership with Strathclyde University and PAMIS.

3. Fraser of Allander Institute: Learning Disability Research Update

Christy also highlighted:



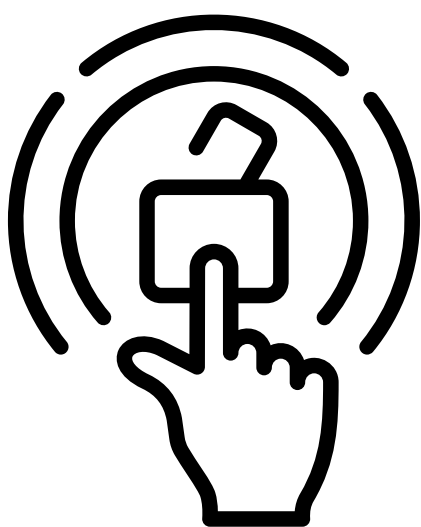
- Employment remains a key gap – just **4–7%** of people with learning disabilities in Scotland are in work, but **86% want to work**.



- Barriers for employers include lack of knowledge and bureaucracy.
- There's good practice out there, but more needs to be done to scale it.
- All publications are available on the Fraser of Allander website and were shared in the meeting slides.

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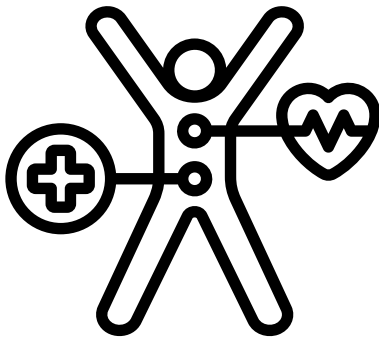


- Concerns were raised about online systems for Universal Credit and Social Security Scotland being hard to access for people with learning disabilities.
- The Fraser of Allander team invited the group to stay in touch and will return to update the CPG on social security in future meetings.



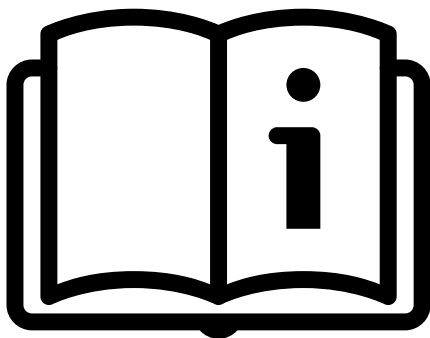
4. Health Checks and Learning Disability Register

Members from the Assembly shared an update following their national conference:

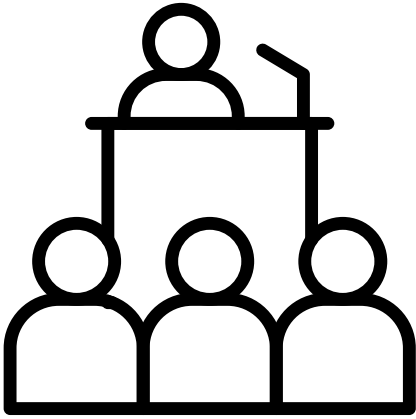


New **resources to support health checks** were launched, including:

- A main information booklet developed with NHS Highland.
- A directory of health board contacts and emails.
- Easy-read template letters to ask GPs to add people to the **Learning Disability Register**.



4. Health Checks and Learning Disability Register



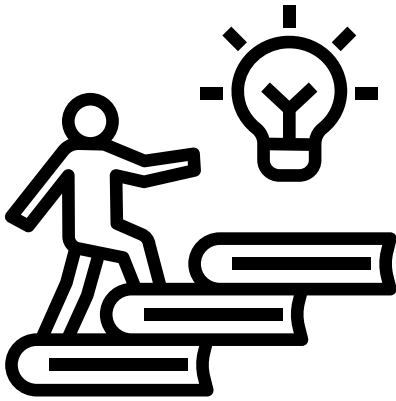
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Problems raised included:



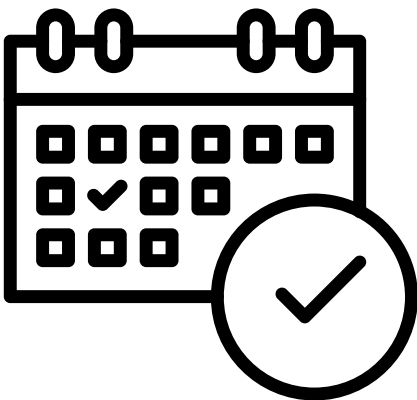
- People not receiving invitations for health checks.
- Pre-check surveys missing or rushed.
- Difficulty contacting health boards.

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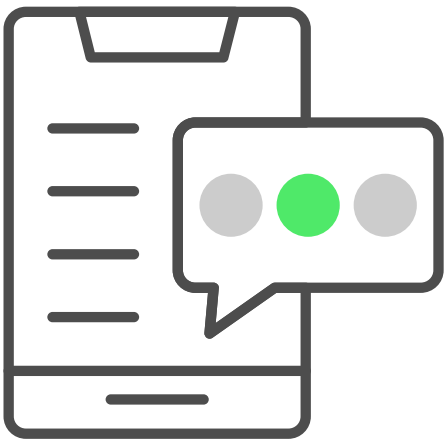
Angela Henderson is working with the Scottish Government to improve how systems talk to each other and ensure people are properly registered.



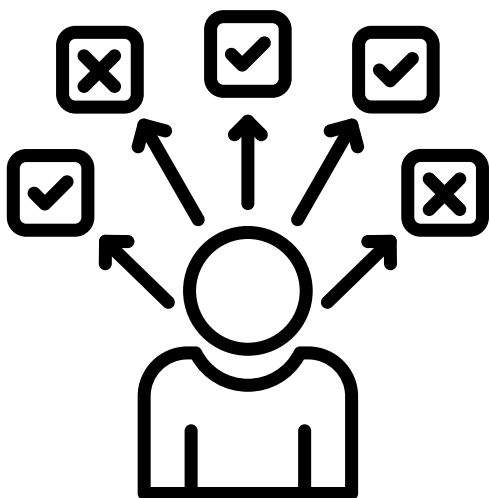
The group discussed how to ensure health boards offer flexible options, like choosing appointment times or format.

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Some members shared that messages by **text** helped with reminders. Others raised concerns about scams or lack of consistent GP contact.



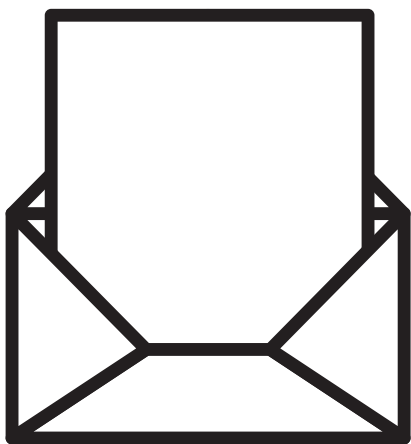
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4. Health Checks and Learning Disability Register

Members from the Assembly shared an update following their national conference:



There was a wider concern about **waiting lists**, missed appointments, and a lack of staff awareness about learning disability needs.



Paul O’Kane MSP reminded the group of a **Scottish Government pledge** that everyone would get a health check. However, the roll-out across Scotland has been patchy. He will raise these concerns with the Minister.

5. Social Security and Support Costs



The group discussed how people with learning disabilities face:

Problems using online portals to manage benefits.

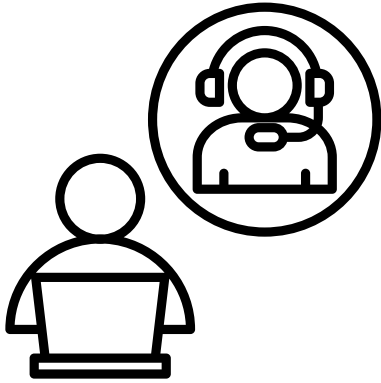


Long delays returning to Universal Credit if jobs don't work out.

Paying for support just to attend medical appointments.

Barriers to getting even basic services without help from charities.

5. Social Security and Support Costs



Members called for:

Better support to access work fairly.



Better data on how many people are affected..

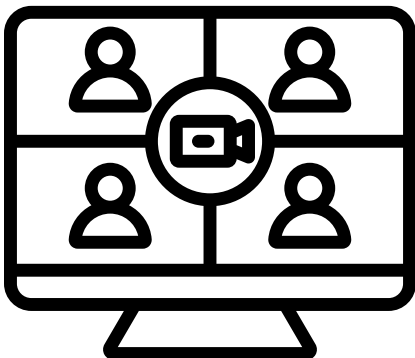
Joined-up systems so people don't fall through the cracks.

6. Any Other Business



Family Fund have published their new report on the **Cost of Caring 2025**, focused on families with disabled or seriously ill children.

You can download the report here: [Link](#)



An online webinar will be held on **25 June 2025**.

The group agreed it would be helpful to **invite Tom Arthur MSP**, Minister for Community Wealth and Public Finance, to the October meeting.

7. Actions Agreed



Share easy-read letter templates for asking GPs to join the LD Register.

Share health board contact directory with group members.



Invite Tom Arthur MSP to October's meeting to discuss health checks and support access.

Follow up with the Minister on the rollout and quality of health checks.



Fraser of Allander to return with an update on the social security part of their programme.

Do you have any questions?



We hope you found these minutes helpful.



If you have any questions about this update you can contact Enable



You can email Enable at:

cpg@enable.org.uk

Produced by Enable
Cross-Party Group Secretariat