



CHANGE

Council of Europe Presentation



About us



Philipa – CEO CHANGE

Introduction and thanks

Agenda



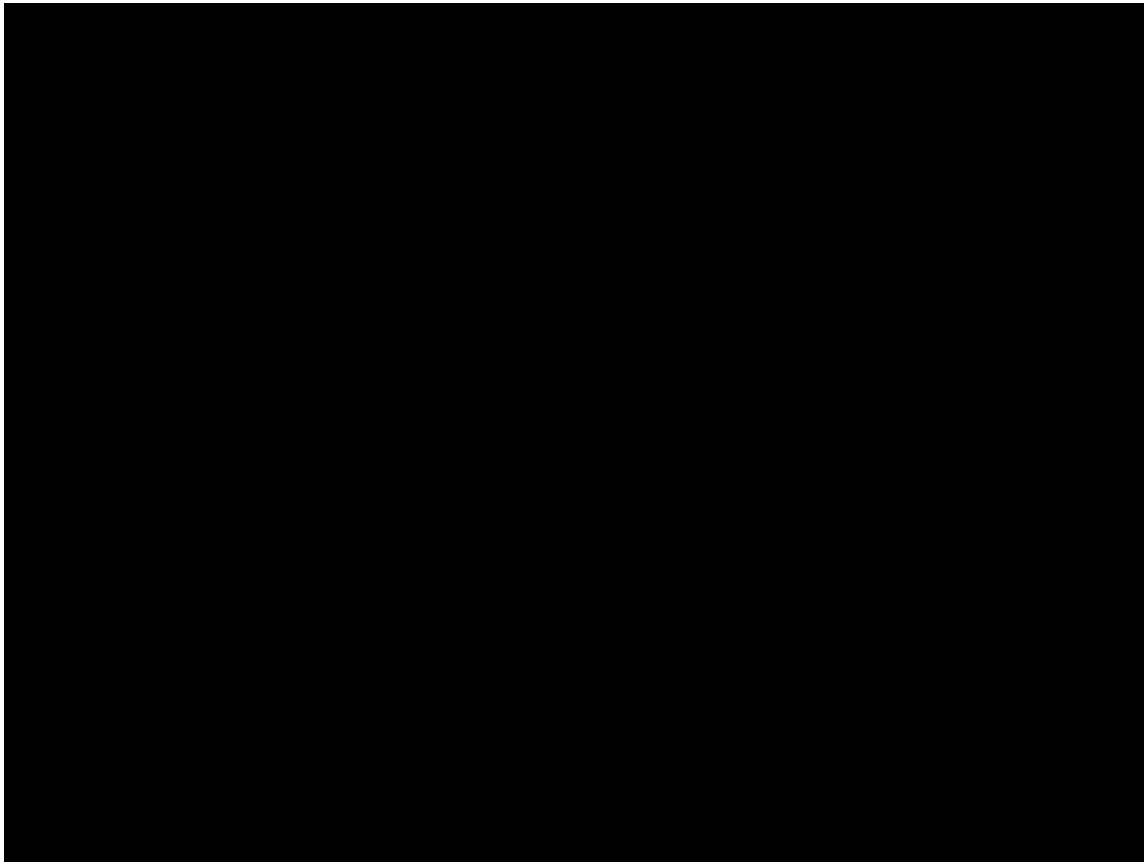
- About CHANGE
- Having a learning disability
- What we do
- Access to Justice through peoples' stories
- Some solutions to consider for accessing justice for people with learning disabilities

About us



We are a leading national human rights organisation led by Disabled People. We work across the UK and internationally employing people with intellectual impairments on proper salaries to co-lead on our work.

What is a learning disability video?



What we do



We work for the rights of people with intellectual impairments by:

- Co researching different areas of people's lives
- Making information into Easy Read
- Co running projects
- Co delivering training

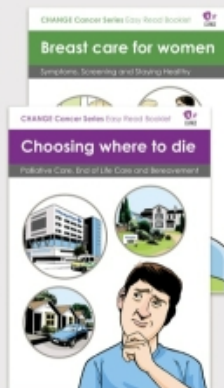
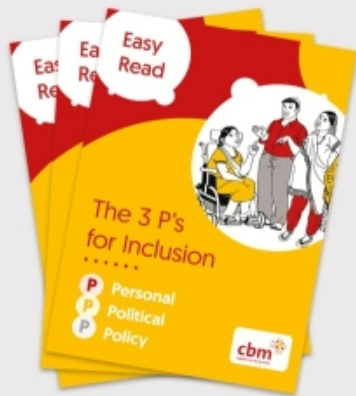
Areas of work



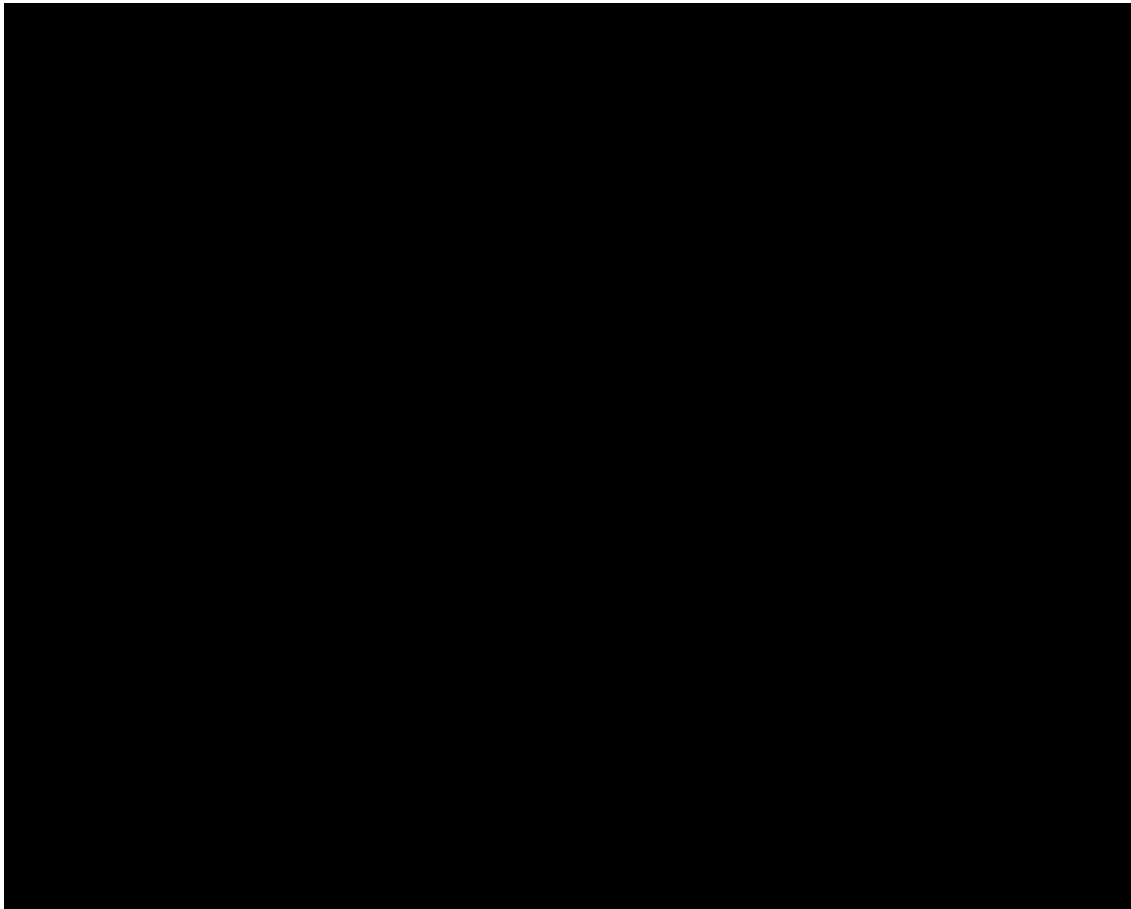
- Parenting
- Employment
- Inclusion
- Health
- Social Care
- Justice

Our Resources

CHANGE Resources



Resources – Abuse animation



Access to Justice



- 20-30% of offenders who enter the criminal justice system have an intellectual impairment
- Loneliness and isolation leading to being pulled into crime
- Not being recognised as having an intellectual impairment
- Accessing legal advice and complex information

Access to Justice



- 3 main issues people with intellectual impairments around potential legal needs
 1. Parents
 2. Disputed benefit claims
 3. Hatecrime
- Whose responsibility?
- People with intellectual impairments not knowing how the legal system could help them so rely on families rather than going to a lawyer

Access to Justice



- People with learning disabilities often need access to justice more than other people but often have far more difficulty accessing it

Chris Kenny, Chief Executive of the Legal Services Board

Access to Justice



Paul's Story

- Paul's experience of Hate Crime
- The police liaison officer
- The court
- Giving evidence
- Preparation
- Reworking the system

Access to Family Courts



Parents with intellectual impairments

- Solicitors and Easy Read
- Lack of legally trained advocates
- No Easy Read assessments, court papers, letters

Access to Justice



Catherine's Story

I have been to court twice against social services for custody of my darling children. The assessment done by a social worker on my parenting needs was very long, difficult to read and understand and made shocking statements about me which were offensive and subjective for example they said that *had dandruff in my hair and wore scruffy trainers*. This made me feel horrible and judged like I didn't have any power and any voice. I didn't understand a lot of my assessment.

Access to Justice



Catherine's Story

I found a solicitor through directory enquiries who followed me on this case, I was lucky in that I can read quite well, many other parents with intellectual impairments can't. My meetings with my solicitor went fine. She was good because she was outspoken and she communicated with me clearly, no nonsense and no jargon. She advised me well before my court cases so that I was well prepared. She would speak up for my rights and I felt understood by her.

Access to Justice



Catherine's Story

However, going to court was not easy. I felt really nervous because I didn't know what was going to happen. I always had to call my solicitor in the evening to find out which court the judge would be sitting in. It was very confusing for me as it meant that I often had to change my travel plans at the last minute.

Access to Justice



Catherine's Story

It was incredibly stressful to go to court.

All the solicitors involved in the case would meet before the hearing and I would wonder what they were talking about. It made me feel nervous and scared.

Access to Justice



Catherine's Story

My solicitor advised me not to give evidence because she said 'I would stick my foot in my mouth', as she put it. I listened to this advice but now I wish I had spoken up. I felt put down by my solicitor.

My voice wasn't heard in a decision which was very important to me and for the rest of my life. I feel terrible about this and I will regret it for the rest of my life.

Access to Justice



Catherine's Story

The problem is there are not advocates trained to be in court and no professionals in court who deal with parents with learning disabilities. This means parents are losing their children without any advice or voice. We are seen as incapable but this is not the case.

The court journey should be made more accessible for parents with learning disabilities so that it can be fair.

What are the solutions

Solutions

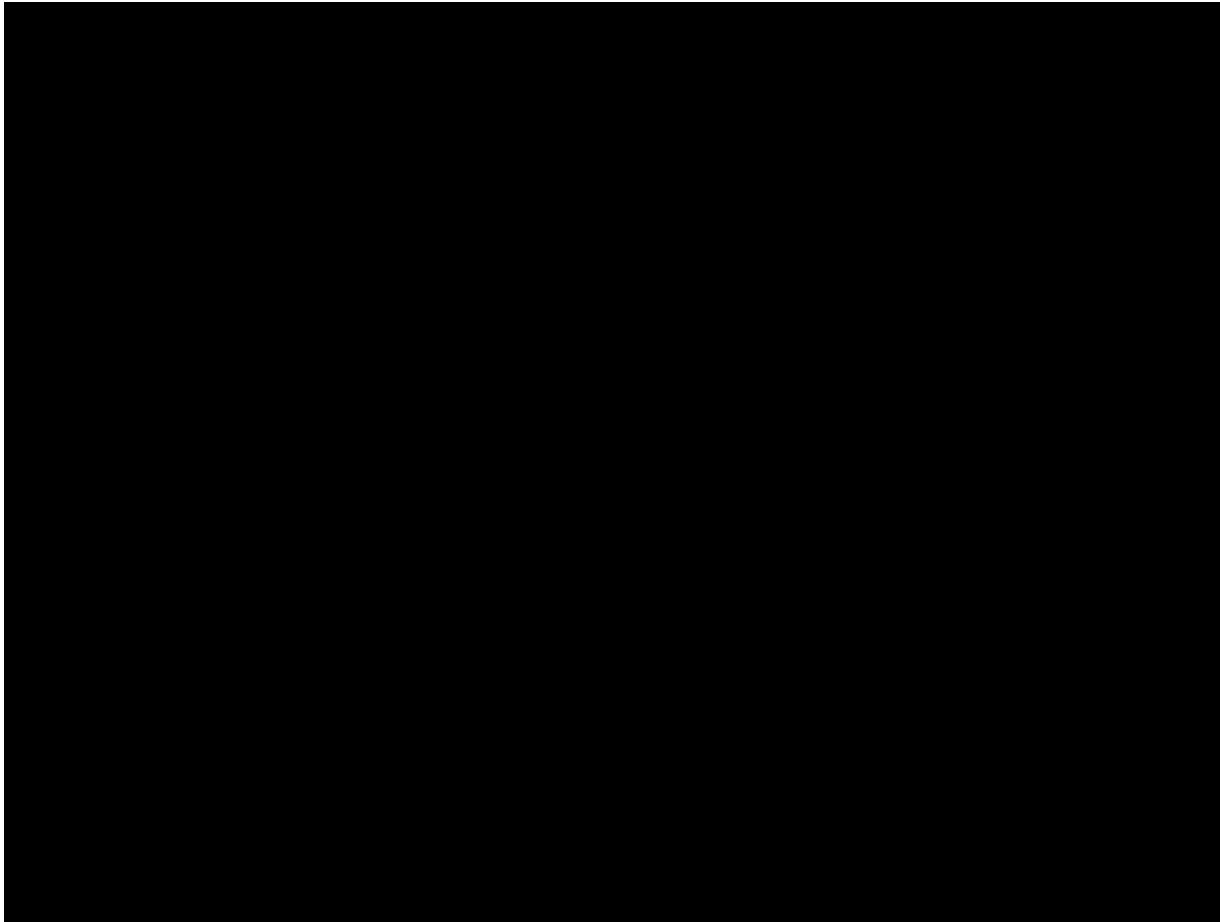
- Early Identification
- CHANGE's work with the prison service
- CHANGE's images
- Training prisoners
- Journey through the prison service
- Letters in Easy Read
- Peer Support
- Involving people with intellectual impairments who've been in the system to improve it

Examples of our work in Justice

CHANGE work connected to prisons and the justice system



CHANGE Rights Video



Thank you



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