



Inclusion London



Free Our People written submission to the Mental Health Bill Committee – June 8th 2025

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[Inclusion London - Promoting equality for London's Deaf and Disabled people](#)

Free Our People Now is the only national mental health law campaign led and controlled by Autistic People and People with learning difficulties/disabilities.

Our focus is to stop putting us into institutions and move us out of hospitals into our own homes.

[About Free Our People Now - Inclusion London](#)



Free Our People Now has set up the [Bring People Home from Psychiatric Hospital network](#) (BPHH) which is a network made up of:

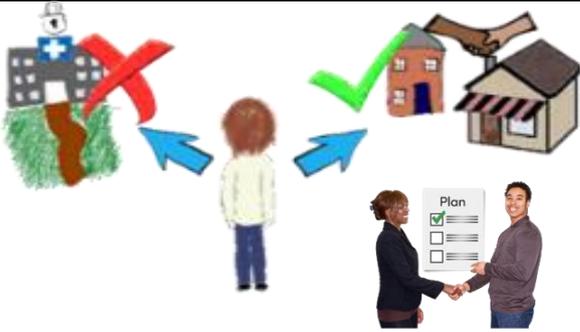
- Autistic people
- People with Learning Difficulties

And the groups and campaigns that we run. We are the only network run by and for Autistic people and People with Learning Difficulties



We have three Government asks for changes to the Mental Health Bill:

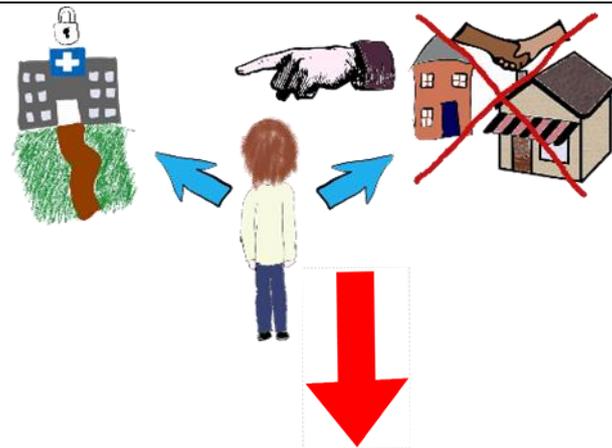
[Bring People Home from Psychiatric Hospital Government Asks 2024](#)



We have a good amount of time to work with Government.

We want a voice in law around

- 1. Co-production so we have a real say in the decisions that affect us and together can design kind and caring services in good and bad times.**



- 2. Our rights to live decent lives in our communities.**

UK law must fully include (incorporate) the UNCRPD (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)

The Government must make sure our human rights are supported.

We must have community care support without being in a mental health hospital.



- 3. Being safe from abuse**

No one has accepted responsibility for badly run hospital services that have led to our deaths, cruel treatment and abuse. Tougher action is needed against service staff who harm us.

To be treated with respect and protected from abuse everywhere



Our Mental Health Bill statement [BPHH-MH-Bill-statement-FINAL.pdf](https://tinyurl.com/34kc6jhp)
 Our Joint Committee on Human Rights Scrutiny of the Mental Health Bill views can be read at <https://tinyurl.com/34kc6jhp>



The Mental Health Bill is about us. There is nothing in the bill about working with us to develop great services that will keep us well in the community.

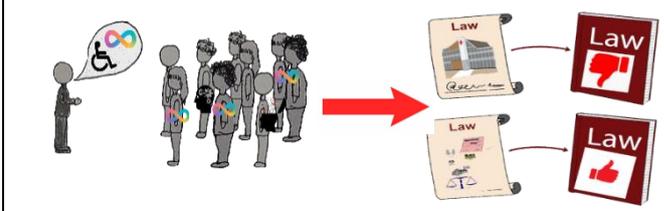


We have been appalled that there has been no listening to the voice of Autistic People and People with learning difficulties since the Mental Health bill was published in November 2024.

No engagement with Ministers about the Mental Health Bill



We are pleased to hear Stephen Kinnock say :
*“There is absolutely no point in the Government making policy in an ivory tower in Westminster or Whitehall.
 Policy must be evidence-based and based on the real, lived experience of patients—we are very committed to building a patient-centric national health service...
 If we try to make policy without involving the voices of those people, the policy will fail; we know that from bitter experience.”* Copied from Tuesday 10th June Hansard debate.





We have sent four letters to Baroness Merron and Stephen Kinnock since we knew the Mental Health bill will be happening.

We have sent a letter to Stephen Kinnock asking him for a meeting after the first committee meeting which took place on 10th June.



Government's ministers have failed to meet with us.
The Government has failed to listen to us.



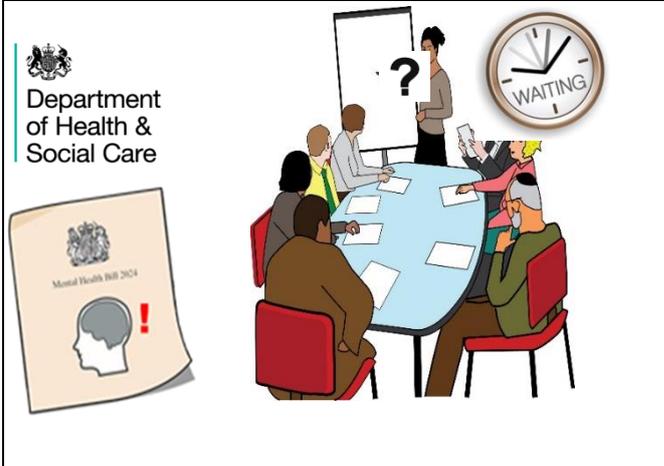
We know Baroness Merron and Stephen Kinnock has met up with big charities such as Mencap, National Autistic Society and Voiceability.



Here is a list of all the Ministers meetings.
<https://tinyurl.com/674mxy5m>



Little Engagement with the Department of Health Civil servants working on the Mental Health Bill and Policy



We have been asking for a meeting with the Mental Health Bill team since November 2024. We had to work out what the Mental Health bill is about from others.

We would much rather the Government's civil servants told us what the Mental Health Bill is about at the start in November.

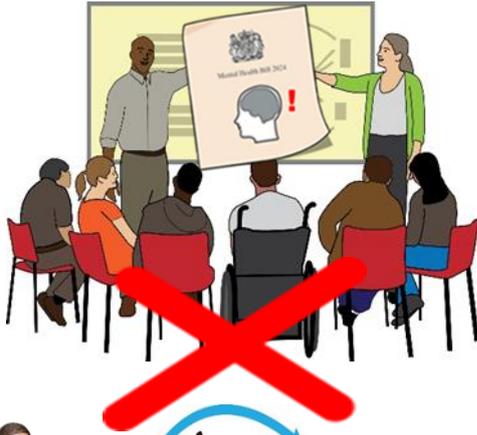


The Department For Health and Social Care policy team who are working on Autism and Learning Disabilities policies have failed to speak to us since November 2024.

Our first meeting has just happened on 5th June – seven months on.

The Mental Health bill will soon be law.

Department of Health & Social Care



We had no help at the right time from the Bill team to go through the bill itself and the changes.

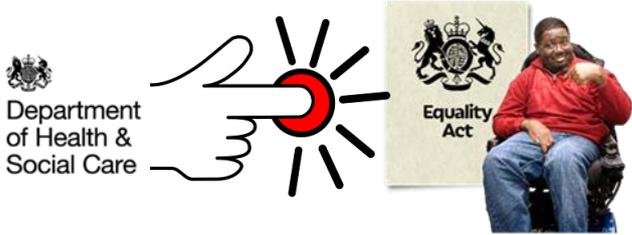
We were told by the Mental Health Bill team that they did not need to make a Government bill in Easy Read.

We should not have to tell Government Ministers and civil servants that they must treat us equally under the Equality Act.



We had 'strong' words about the Equality Act with the Mental Health Bill team.

We have the Easy Read bill and House of Lords changes.



It would be better if the Mental Health Bill team and DHSC follow the Equality Act from the start.

No real engagement with the Mental Health Bill Committee whilst Autism and Learning Disabilities clauses are being debated line by line



We saw information about only giving written evidence to the Mental Health Bill committee on Tuesday, 20th May.

We see the Mental Health Bill committee is meeting on June 10th.

Mental Health Bill: call for evidence - UK Parliament

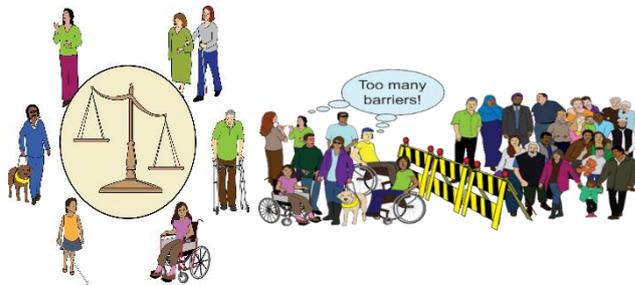




3 weeks is not enough time for us. We see Autism and Learning Disabilities sections are at the start of the Bill.

This means we expect the debate about Autism and Learning Disability will take place at the start of the first committee meeting on June 10th.

What changes must happen from now in line with the Equality Act disability-related reasonable duties and Public Sector Equality Duty



Whilst our focus is on the Mental Health Bill committee, we had the same challenges with the Joint Committee on Human Rights review of the Mental Health Bill.

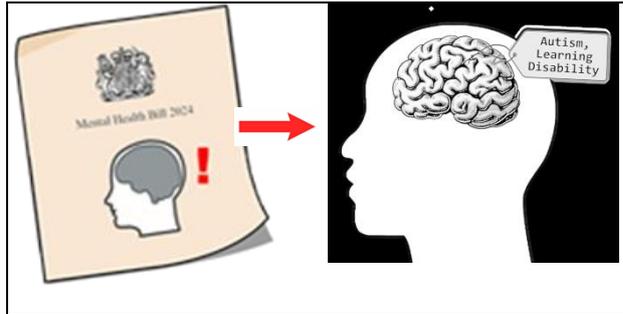
We had 'strong' words about the Equality Act with the committee clerk about the same issues.



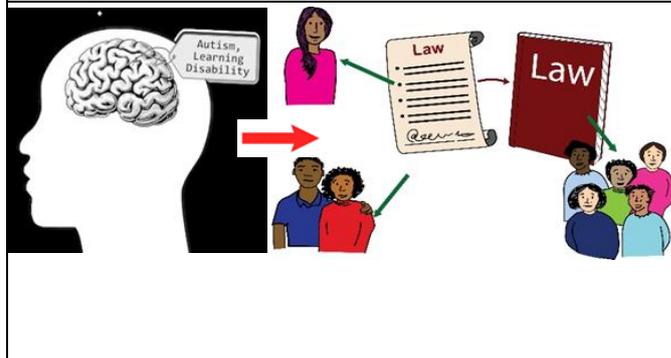
It is good that the Joint Committee on Human Rights committee had made changes to make the process more accessible and inclusive.



It would be better for committee and clerks to follow the Equality Act from the start.



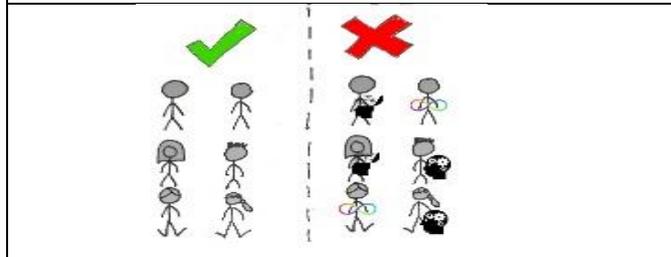
This Mental Health Bill is about Autistic People and People with learning disabilities/ learning difficulties.



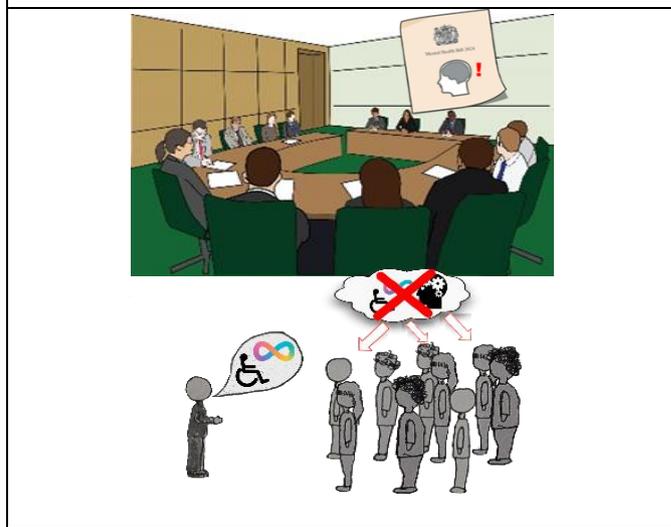
Government can expect that we want to know and be engaged with the Mental Health bill. Government should have planned for our engagement before The bill went into Parliament. When the bill is in Parliament. When the bill becomes law.



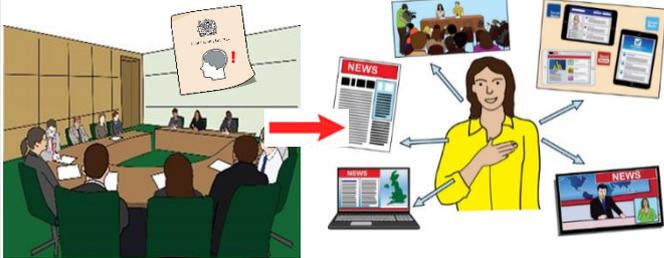
The Government has failed in their Equality Act anticipatory reasonable adjustment duty to make Government business about the Mental Health Bill accessible for us. [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) and [Equality Act](#)

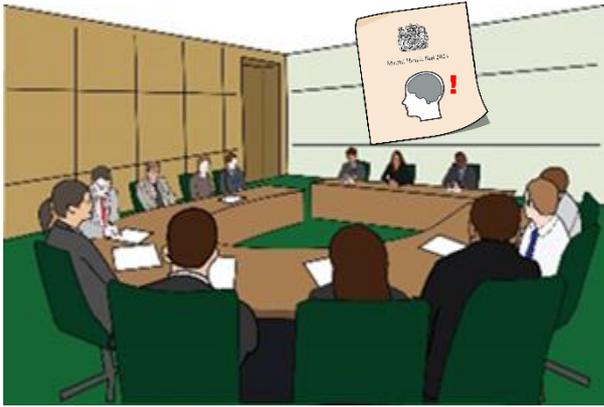


We have experienced disability discrimination.



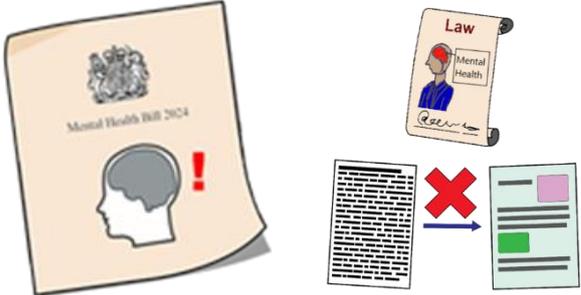
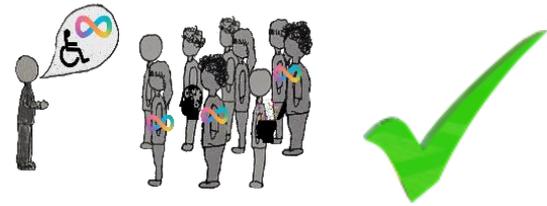
We want change. We are asking the Mental Health Bill Committee including Ministers to treat People with learning difficulties and Autistic People equally under the Equality Act.

	<p>We are asking for the following under the Equality Act disability reasonable adjustments duty</p>
	<p>Mental Health Bill committee Call of Evidence is in Easy Read</p>
	<p>More time for us to give evidence before the Bill committee starts. We suggest 4 weeks.</p>
	<p>Accept other forms of evidence including videos, art, signed and music. Face to Face evidence where we can speak in different ways.</p>



MPs must have our evidence before they start going through the Mental Health Bill line by line. The Mental Health Bill committee should only debate the Autism and Learning Disability parts of the Bill once the MPs have

- Time to receive law changes ideas from us.
- Time for us to meet with MPs to get in touch with us.
- The chance to read our changes and understand what we want to achieve.
- Time to work with the committee clerk to draft changes to the Bill
- Enough time for the committee to debate the changes we want.
- Time to explain what changes they would like to see to the Government’s Mental Health bill.



Government’s changes to the Mental Health bill will be in Easy Read and explained to us before and during the committee debate.

Department of Health & Social Care

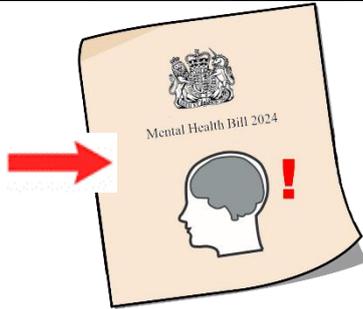
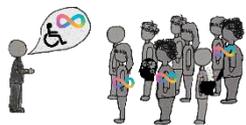


The Mental Health Bill team will tell us what Mental Health bill changes have been made by this committee.

A copy of the Mental Health Bill including Mental Health Bill committee changes made in Easy Read before report and third reading.

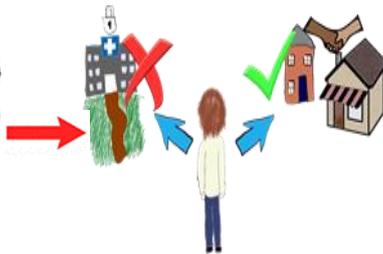
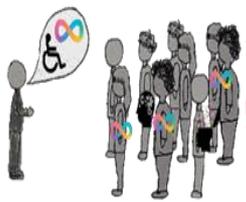


We want the Ministers to meet with us to talk about how the Mental Health Bill can be better for us before it becomes law.

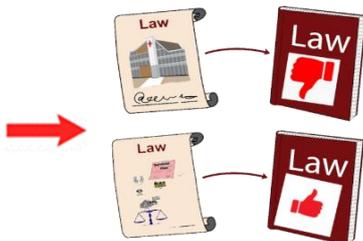


The only way we will get a voice about anything in the Mental Health bill is to make it law based on our experience and evidence.

We want the Government, DHSC and everyone else to follow the Equality law from the start.



Co-Produce right from the start with Autistic People and People with learning difficulties.



Nothing About Us without Us