

Our voices ■ Our choices

EMBARGO: 00.01 18th January 2018

New funding for research led by disabled people in Scotland

Today, the National Lottery funded DRILL (Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning) Programme has announced funding for Scottish research into the accessibility of toilets for disabled people using public transport. The project will be led by the Edinburgh Centre for Research on the Experience of Dementia. The Centre will work in partnership with charity PAMIS, dementia experts and training providers Upstream, as well as individuals with first-hand experience of dementia.

The UK-wide DRILL research programme was launched in 2015 – a scheme led by disabled people and funded by the Big Lottery Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK. The programme is being delivered over 5 years by Inclusion Scotland, Disability Action Northern Ireland, Disability Wales and Disability Rights UK. DRILL funds innovative projects exploring new ways in which disabled people can live as full citizens in society. All DRILL projects are led by disabled people or people with long term health conditions, working in partnership with academics and policy makers.

Six Scotland based research projects, totalling over £445,000, have been supported by DRILL so far. This includes research into: decision-making by people with learning disabilities, the participation of people with mental health conditions in public life, self-directed support in Scotland, social strategies used by autistic people, and adapted social housing.

Professor Heather Wilkinson, Director of the ECREd centre at the University of Edinburgh, said:

“I am delighted to be leading on this innovative and important project to improve the design and findability of accessible toilets when travelling. By bringing together a diverse range of people, and working with strong partners, we will create a strong united voice on the top priorities and solutions that service providers should focus

on when designing and assessing their provision. The funding will enable us to produce guidance and an audit tool to help develop accessible toilet provision.”

Dr Sally Witcher, Chief Executive Officer at Inclusion Scotland, said:

“We are delighted to see the important issue of toilets and transport join Scotland’s fantastic portfolio of DRILL funded projects. Access to toilets is obviously a basic requirement for anyone wishing to travel and is something that most people just take for granted. However, the impact of not having access to toilets has a major impact on disabled people’s freedom of movement and their ability to achieve independent living. With decision-making, participation in public life, Self-Directed Support, housing, autism and now toilet access as themes, DRILL continues to support disabled people in Scotland to lead high quality research into the issues which matter to us most.”

ENDS

For further information contact: Iain Smith, Policy and Public Affairs Officer Tel: 0131 281 0862 Mob: 07740 731651 press@inclusionScotland.org

Notes to editors:

1. Inclusion Scotland is a national network of disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) and individual disabled people. We work to ensure that policy affecting the everyday lives of disabled people in Scotland is informed by and reflects their views. We work for the removal of barriers to the inclusion of disabled people into all aspects of Scottish civic, social and economic life. To those ends we carry out policy work and information, engagement and capacity-building activities at national and local level across Scotland.
2. Big Lottery Fund uses money raised by National Lottery players to help communities achieve their ambitions. From small, local projects to UK-wide initiatives, its funding brings people together to make a difference to their health, wellbeing and environment. Since June 2004 it has awarded £8.5 billion to projects that improve the lives of millions of people.
3. Launched in 2015, the DRILL programme is fully funded by Big Lottery Fund and delivered by Disability Rights UK, Disability Action Northern Ireland, Inclusion Scotland and Disability Wales. DRILL is expecting to fund a total of up to 40 research pilots and projects over a 5-year period, all led by disabled people. Around £1,000,000 has been allocated in this round of applications.
4. Each country has a National Advisory Group, including disabled people, academics and policy makers, who provide advice, scrutinise research proposals, make recommendations and help promote and disseminate the findings. A Central Research Committee, made up of disabled people, academics and policy influencers from across the UK, makes the final decision on which research proposals receive funding.
5. Successful projects in Scotland include:

- Does it matter? Decision making by people with learning difficulties – by People First Scotland, in partnership with Animate Consultant.
 - Increasing participation in civic and public life: co-producing solutions – by Voices of eXperience, in partnership with the University of Strathclyde.
Read the final report here:
 - Researching the costs and benefits of good self-directed support’ – by the University of Stirling, with the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL) and Independent Living in Scotland.
 - ‘Researching rented accommodation for disabled people’ – by Horizon Housing Association, with the University of Stirling and Housing Options Scotland.
 - Examining the barriers faced by people with autism’ – by the University of Glasgow.
6. ‘Does it Matter?’ was the first DRILL-funded project to complete, in summer last year.

Keith Lynch, of People First Scotland’s DRILL project steering group, said:

“Of greatest importance to People First (Scotland) was the lead taken by members of our organisation. The research was planned, developed, adapted and carried out by us. Peer researchers got the opportunity to learn interview skills and used questions we had designed so we knew that they would work.

We learnt that some people had never thought about how much choice they actually have in their life until they took part in the research. Many people we spoke to started to think about decision-making for the first time.

As a result of our research, the conversation about decisions and people with learning disabilities making decisions is happening in many more places already”.

7. **Independent Living** is defined as: All disabled people having the same choice, control, dignity and freedom as any other citizen to achieve their goals at home, in education, at work, and as members of the community. This does not necessarily mean disabled people doing things for themselves but it does mean having the right to practical assistance based on their choices and aspirations.