

# The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)

## [ALLIANCE Connect Member Networking Session – Learning Disability Focus]

[26<sup>th</sup> November 2024]



**ALLIANCE**  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE  
ALLIANCE SCOTLAND  
people at the centre

## Table of Contents

<b>Overview:</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>What our members say:</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Contact</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Endnotes</b> .....	<b>6</b>

## Overview:

On 26-November 2024, ALLIANCE members from across our lived experience, professional associate, and organisational networks gathered to connect, share experience of, and discuss key national issues facing those with learning disabilities across Scotland. One area of predominant focus throughout the event was the implementation of [annual health checks for adults with learning disabilities](#) across Scottish Health Boards which began in 2022. This area of focus emerged as particularly salient for many ALLIANCE members, following findings from a recent [Scottish Labour FOI](#), which uncovered regional inequity in implementation and highlighted national under delivery of annual health checks across Scotland. The following report outlines the key points of discussion and areas of importance raised by ALLIANCE members.

## What our members say:

ALLIANCE members identified the following issues:

- The failed commitment toward the implementation of annual health checks for adults with learning disabilities across Scotland stands as **clear evidence of a broader national failure to address the significant health inequalities known to affect those with learning disabilities** and serves to further disadvantage an already health marginalised group.
- **There must be greater transparency, guidelines, and reporting around the implementation of this role out.** This is evidenced through the failure of multiple health boards to report on any progress to implement national health checks since 2022. There must be a rigorous process of data collection to reflect and measure progress, implementation, and impact. Importantly, this data collection must involve qualitative measurements, not just quantitative.

- ALLIANCE members identified **a need for greater transparency around who is involved at national level** in the implementation of the annual health checks.
- **There is a need for a more rigorous process of data collection around learning disabilities in Scotland.** Without a robust and accurate register of learning disability for Scotland, the roll out of annual health checks cannot comprehensively capture or address the need for care. Furthermore, evidence from our members highlighted that without adequate patient record data, the health and care of those with learning disabilities is compromised.
- It is critical to our members that **those with lived experience of learning disability are at the centre of the national roll out and their priorities rest at the heart of the service design.** There has been no transparency on if, or how, lived experience has been a part of the design or delivery of health checks thus far. This is seen to have implications for the extent to which the rights of those living with learning disabilities are respected and reflected in the services they are to receive.
- **There must be a commitment to a greater level of clinical training and awareness of learning disability amongst care providers.** This is critical to ensuring that practitioners can fully involve people with learning disabilities in their own care.
- **People living with a learning disability must be provided with a better level and quality of communication around how to access their own care.** Work is currently being carried out within the Third Sector to ‘demystify’ and share knowledge about the annual health checks, however a similar commitment must be made at national level.

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# About the ALLIANCE

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) is the national third sector intermediary for a range of health and social care organisations. We have a growing membership of over 3,800 national and local third sector organisations, associates in the statutory and private sectors, disabled people, people living with long term conditions and unpaid carers. Many NHS Boards, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Medical Practices, Third Sector Interfaces, Libraries and Access Panels are also members.

The ALLIANCE is a strategic partner of the Scottish Government and has close working relationships, several of which are underpinned by Memorandum of Understanding, with many national NHS Boards, academic institutions and key organisations spanning health, social care, housing and digital technology.

Our vision is for a Scotland where people of all ages who are disabled or living with long term conditions, and unpaid carers, have a strong voice and enjoy their right to live well, as equal and active citizens, free from discrimination, with support and services that put them at the centre.

The ALLIANCE has three core aims. We seek to:

- Ensure people are at the centre, that their voices, expertise and rights drive policy and sit at the heart of design, delivery and improvement of support and services.
- Support transformational change, towards approaches that work with individual and community assets, helping people to stay well, supporting human rights, self management, co-production and independent living.
- Champion and support the third sector as a vital strategic and delivery partner and foster better cross-sector understanding and partnership.



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## Endnotes