**Disability Consultation Focus Group - 2nd March 2022**

A focus group took was hosted by Compass Advocacy Network BASE day opportunities adults -Attendees were all over the age of 18 years old with a learning disability, autism and/or mental health support needs.

The focus group took place on Tuesday 2nd March 2022 at from 11am-1.00pm. In attendance was 10 adult and two support workers.

* 6 male and 4 females
* 4 individuals aged between ages 18-30 years and 5 individuals aged between 31-50 and one participant aged between 51-69 years.
* All 10 attendees said they had a disability. All have been referred through social workers to this service due to individual needs.

**Disabilities included:**  Learning disabilities, Communication disabilities, ADHD and Autism.

**When asked do you know what a crime is?**

6 participants answered yes and 4 answered not sure

**When asked why the following examples where given:**

If you steal something, Burglary, If you hit someone, Murder, Fraud, Hate crime, Harassment, bullying, touching in the wrong way, safety online/false accounts looking for personal information, online grooming, self-defence.

**When asked when they feel safe?**

* 9 said they always feel safe in their home
* 1 said they sometimes feel safe in their home
* 5 said they always feel safe in their community
* 5 said they sometimes feel safe in their community

**Comments about feeling safe and unsafe included:**

**Safe**

* Feel safe with my parents (x 3 comments)
* Feel safe living on own
* Having dogs makes me feel safe
* I lock my doors
* CCTV
* If people understood autism and that we are all not the same

**Unsafe**

* If you don’t know the area I feel unsafe
* I get scared at night
* Domestic Violence would make me feel unsafe
* People going around houses (in white vans)
* Sometimes I don’t know who’s around
* I’m scared someone would make fun of me
* Nervous close to town
* Worries about getting beat up
* Public transport at night
* People don’t understand and think its funny
* Feel unsafe on the buses (was told to get off the bus)
* Drinking and drunk people
* Feel unsafe walking past groups of people (feel unsure)
* People not having patience
* I go the quickest way
* Sometime people get short changed
* Getting blamed for something you didn’t do
* Don’t under you at school
* People rushing people with a speech impediment
* Translink – covid felt like being interviewed
* People don’t understand (disability)
* Think its funny (to call names)

**When asked do you have someone you can always contact if you do not feel safe?**

8 people said yes, 2 said not sure.

Comments: Social worker, Policeman, Parents, Family, Support line (Lifeline when clarified by support worker), Childline, NSPCC, Women’s Aid.

**When asked do you know how to report crime?**

5 people answered yes and 5 people answered no

**Comments:** Ring 999. Support worker agreed that some members would be yes and other would not.

**When asked what would help you report a crime?**

* If there was a number for people with disabilities
* Texts would help
* Feel more comfortable writing than saying
* Support to report (reception doesn’t understand – said this was the same for making appointments at doctors)
* Need more support
* Being treated good
* Pictures and symbols
* Not to think you are attention seeking (teacher thought I was)
* A card with the right numbers

**Support workers comments:**

* Education and Understanding learning difficulties – being given a chance
* Service users often feel overlooked and not treated with respect/labelled
* Often don’t understand the processes (the timeframes aren’t explained or adhered to which causes confusion) – similar issues with docs and medical appointments
* Picture and symbols
* Don’t talk too fast and not taking time
* Simple language

**What would help you feel safe in your home and community.**

* Other people being educated
* Explain – don’t talk to fast.
* Language used is too hard to understand use simple language
* Alarms walking through dark areas
* Good lights/camera (duck pond)
* Stop bullying at school for people with special needs
* Safe places to go
* Stop people calling you all names
* Cameras
* Teachers don’t have patience
* You need a social worker to come to base

Support workers comments:

* Sometimes it takes so much time for Police to come that the detail can be forgotten before it is investigated
* Often have to fight for support/an advocate so there is many people with disabilities who do not get support and are vulnerable
* There can be a scary view of PSNI with some members
* Mainstream schools don’t automatically get social worker so needs can slip under the carpet. Other area that’s social workers change and files go from one to another so they don’t always get to know the individual well.