



## London Campaign Network Meeting



**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025**  
**11am – 3:00pm**

**Voluntary Action Islington**  
200a Pentonville Road  
London N1 9JP



Raymond Johnson and Samantha Johnson welcomed over 30 people to the third meeting of the London Campaign Network.

The priority areas you set were:

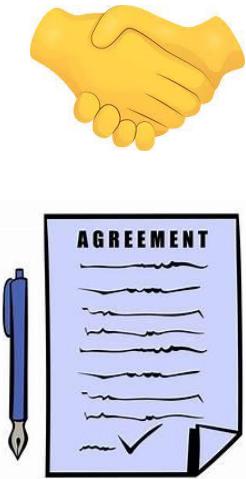
- Benefits and Money
- Hate Crime
- Advocacy



### Introducing ourselves

We asked people to say their name and something they liked about the summer.

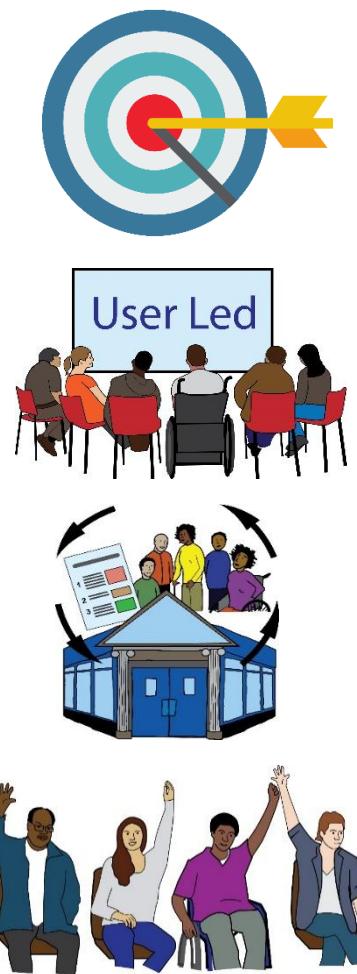
We then asked people to pass on to the next person by throwing bean bags.



## Our Agreements for the day

Sam went through the agreements which are to help us to work well together:

- One person to speak at a time
- Phones off or on silent
- Respect everyone's points of view
- Keep to time
- Support and encourage each other



## Our 4 big aims

Ray talked through why we wanted to set up the network.

- To set up a 'London Campaign Network' for and run by self-advocates with learning difficulties/disabilities.
- To find opportunities to work together on campaigns that matter to us all.
- To influence the people that make decisions about us.
- To improve the lives of people with learning difficulties/disabilities across London.



## What we have done so far

We visited groups and attended events across London to find out what is going on.

We wrote a letter and a statement based on all the feedback about barriers and solutions.  
We sent this to MPs.

We wrote to Sir Stephen Timms MP (Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions), and Liz Kendall MP (Secretary of State for Work and Pensions).

We responded to the Government's consultation on the Green Paper 'Pathways to work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working, using the feedback from our last workshop.

We had an article about our last event and what we thought of the benefit cuts published in Disability News Service.

<https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/self-advocates-from-across-london-send-government-a-message-of-fear-concern-and-anger-over-benefit-cuts/>

By [John Pring](#) on 13th March 2025

Category: [Activism and Campaigning](#)

**Self-advocates from across London send government a message of fear, concern... and anger over benefit cuts**





## Guest Presenter: Svetlana Kotova

### Benefit Reforms

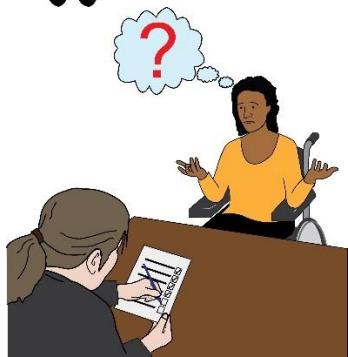
- Government want to save money and cut benefits
- Cut PIP
- Change Universal credit

### Other things the Government wanted to do:

- Restart face to face assessments
- Scrap Work Capability Assessment
- Put money into employment support

### We stood up for our rights

- Met with MPs
- Wrote to them
- Supported DPOs to help Disabled people meet with their MPs
- Spoke to media
- Went on protest



## Many MPs were not happy

- They refused to vote for all changes

## Things we won back

- No PIP cuts for now
- Co-production of PIP review till November 2026
- Small increase for current UC and ESA claimants

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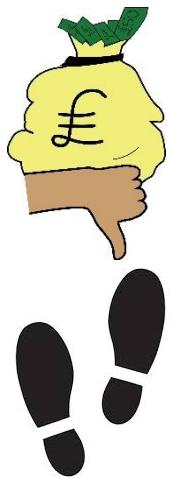
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## Big problem still

- From April 2026 Disabled people who claim UC for first time will get less
- This is young people and people who work now but lose job then



- New smaller group of people who will be protected from cuts and reassessments
- Face to face assessments

## Next steps

- Get them to listen to us
- Make sure they focus is on what employers are doing
- Get them to rethink how they see benefits spending
- continue to pressure for a meeting with the Minister



## Questions

People asked about the groups being set up for the review.  
Svetlana will keep People First up to date with what is happening.



## Soap Boxes

Everyone was offered a 5 minutes on the Soap Box to talk about their work.

**We heard from:**

**Advocacy in Greenwich**



Robert told us that they have less staff who are doing more work as they don't have any money to hire someone new. Even though they're short-staffed, they're still trying to run three different projects.

Robert said that the government is not supporting charities enough right now.

Many disabled people are losing the support they used to have and losing benefits to help them live. He said, 'we're losing our freedom, we can't live how we want.'

Robert also said it's becoming harder to get benefits because the way the government checks people is stricter now. Some people who used to get support are now being told they don't qualify anymore, even if they still need help.

## Breaking Out Of The Bubble (BOB)

Gina and Jen told us that they went to the House of Lords to talk at a book launch.



The book is called "The Antidote: How People Powered Movements Can Renew Politics, Policy and Practice" by

Peter Beresford. They were invited to speak about their experiences and ideas. It was a great opportunity for BOB.

The BOB team has been helping people with learning difficulties who live in care homes. They want to find out how many people in Lambeth live in care homes and have learning difficulties or disabilities. They want to make sure these people are heard and get the right support. They are running training sessions to build skills and confidence. Sending emails and trying to speak up for people who can't do it on their own.

BOB have been working hard influencing other organisations to work in a better, more inclusive way for people with learning difficulties. They have been speaking to funders (people who give money to charities) about their experiences. They found out that some funders don't reply to emails or phone calls. They're making a questionnaire to gather more information and will give feedback.

BOB also has their own radio show which happens once a month. On the show, they talk about topics they care about and raise awareness about issues affecting people with learning difficulties.

## Generate Voices



Terry, Leon, Karen and Malachi have been working hard on campaigns and speaking up.

They joined a protest with Inclusion London on the 29th. The protest was about getting people with learning difficulties out of hospitals and back to live with their families. Leon said:

**“It’s important to help people leave hospitals and return home where they feel safe and loved.”**

They've been meeting with different organisations to share ideas and work together. One example is Mencap asked them to speak to mental health services to help get people out of long-term hospital placements.

They also attended a Speak Up event with Speaking Up Hounslow and John Hersoff (supporter and speaker).

**Inclusion London**



Simone has been campaigning for people with learning difficulties for over 13 years. Her first campaign was with People First, an organisation run by and for people with learning difficulties.

Simone shared her concerns about the disconnect and friction between the UK Government and people with learning difficulties.

She feels the government is more likely to include disabled people in decisions, but not people with learning difficulties. There is something different about this government, and it's something to do with how they treat people with learning difficulties.”

**The Assisted Dying Bill:** A new bill is going to the House of Lords about assisted dying. Simone says disabled people were included in the conversation, but people with learning

difficulties were left out. This raises questions about who gets to speak and be heard when laws are being made.

Simone said that some MPs are starting to pay attention, but they often listen only to organisations, not to the actual people those organisations are meant to represent.

Simone believes that many organisations working on disability issues don't have workers who reflect or truly understand the people they claim to support.

Simone said that People First should run training for MPs so they can understand the real experiences of people with learning difficulties and hear directly from the community, not just managers or charity reps.

## Involve Kingston



Mario works with three other peer advocates at Involve Kingston.

They work to make documents easier to understand by producing easy read documents. They want to make sure things are truly accessible to people with learning difficulties

Mario will be attending a Kingston Safeguarding Meeting to ensure people with learning difficulties are considered in keeping safe.

Mario thinks Involve Kingston and People First should have a meeting to compare how they both make information accessible and share best practices. This could help set better standards across different areas.

## The Advocacy Project



This group is working on 7 major focus areas to help improve the lives of people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

1. **Changing Lives Project:** Based in Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea, it aims to make real changes for people with learning difficulties in those boroughs.
2. **Good Support:** Focused on helping parents and carers understand how to best support people with learning difficulties. They are thinking about holding pop-up roadshows to share information in local areas.
3. **Housing:** No detailed update was given, but housing remains a key concern.
4. **Health:** Focus on making sure people get their annual health checks. They have noticed that younger people are not going for health checks. They are looking into Health passports, the quality of the health check service and dementia risks particularly for people with Down Syndrome.
5. **Information Access:** They are creating a new, accessible website, which is being funded by North West London, and also working on a project called “Planet Care Services”
6. **Independent Living:** They want to support more people with learning difficulties to live independently. Website accessibility is a big part of this work, to ensure people can find what they need easily.

7. Digital Inclusion: the advocacy project has a strong focus on making websites easier for everyone to use, especially people with learning difficulties and disabilities. They are looking at other websites too, especially ones that offer healthcare services. Many websites are still too hard to understand or use for people with learning difficulties. When information about health or care is not clear, people miss out on support they need. Making websites easier to use can help people feel more independent and in control of their health.

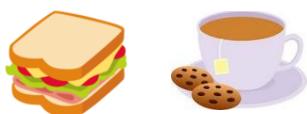
### One-to-One Enfield Representative

Faye has been working independently to create a list of accessible services across London.

The aim is to help people with learning difficulties and disabilities find what they need more easily

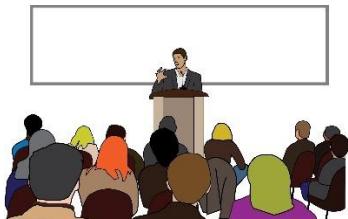


This list includes services to support different types of needs including health, social care, housing, and more.



**12:30pm – 1:15pm**

Lunch and Networking



### Discussions

As the room was very hot, we had a large group discussion and agreed to finish early.



## Some of our next steps:

- Communicate with MPs
- Link with Inclusion London
- Get involved in the PIP review
- Invite DWP staff to the next meeting
- Write a joint letter
- More regular meetings in between big meet ups
- Campaign for funding engagement
- Articles and interviews

**We will start to focus on Hate Crime at our future meetings.**

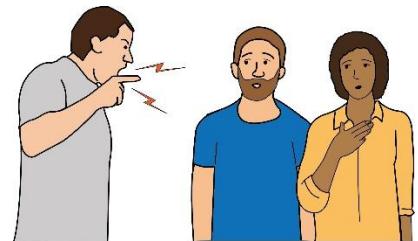
**Advocacy**

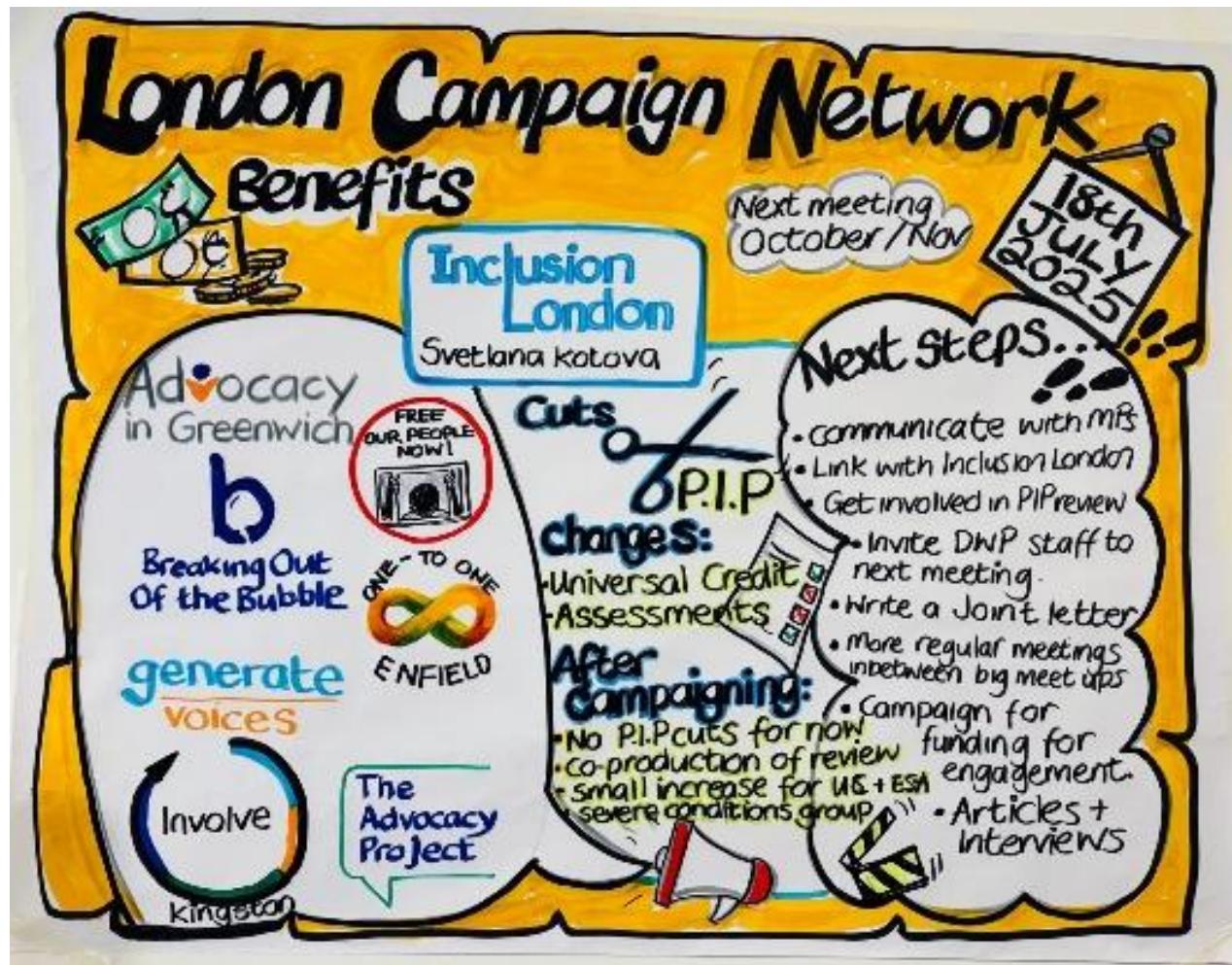


**Benefits and Money**



**Hate Crime**





Date of the next London Campaign Network meeting is:



**Thursday 5th February 2025**  
**11am – 3:30pm**



**We Are 336, 336 Brixton Road, Brixton, London,  
SW9 7AA**



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