



Across Britain 28th Feb 2009

Fiona Sinclair, of [Autism Rights](#) spoke at the Convention of Modern Liberty that took place across Britain in Glasgow. See the [full text of her Speech](#).

## SUMMARY OF GLASGOW MODERN LIBERTY CONVENTION EVENT

I distributed the Autism Rights leaflets to most of those attending the Glasgow event. (See leaflets links below).

I had my very own `Brian Deer moment` when Martin Bartos, a psychiatrist and former parliamentary candidate for the Scottish Green Party attending the event objected to my leaflet. As he wouldn't clarify what his precise objections were, I can only conclude that he took umbrage at my use of the phrase `forced drugging` in the section on the Mental Health Act. As this is what the new Community Treatment Orders are in practice, I wasn't prepared to take his `advice` that I should talk to a psychiatrist ... about my leaflet.

He really wanted to make his point very forcibly - so forcibly that I had to tell him several times to calm down. His voice was raised to the point that I was finding it very uncomfortable, particularly as he was standing so close to me. He was not interested in hearing any explanation that I attempted to give about the way that adults have been treated within the mental health system - particularly the fact that parents have told me that they have been forced to agree to drug their sons (it usually is sons), under the threat that their son will be Sectioned - and then they lose all control. One such adult has been more than 12 years in an institution. (See NOTE below)

The morning and afternoon sessions were split between Surveillance - with an MSP and MP giving speeches - and Liberty, with myself and Sue Palmer, the author of `Toxic Childhood` the main speakers in the afternoon. Attendance for the afternoon Liberty session was considerably less than for the one on Surveillance, but it proved lively. Ken MacDonald, the Assistant Information Commissioner attended and the session was chaired by Mike Nellis, Professor of Community and Criminal Justice, Institute of Advanced Studies /Strathclyde University.

Both talks by myself and Sue Palmer were well received, with extended contributions from a member of the Children's Panel as regards the Scottish Government's plans to retain the DNA of children coming before the Children's Panel accused of committing violent or sexual crimes and from others as regards the Mental Health Act. It was pointed out that it now needed only one psychiatrist to Section someone under the new Act and that psychiatrists were averse to giving second opinions on the decisions of other psychiatrists.

Much of what was said reinforced my own [speech](#). (However, a consultant psychiatrist claimed that there were inaccuracies in my leaflet, and that I had claimed that there was no right of appeal within the Mental Health Act. I made no such claim. He was otherwise unable to detail what these inaccuracies were. As one contributor had revealed that his wife had been Sectioned under the Mental Health Act by just one psychiatrist on the basis of her depression after a miscarriage, and that the complaints procedures are a waste of time,

as the Mental Welfare Commission is itself loaded with psychiatrists, this psychiatrist was toiling for support for his views.

[NOTE; A BBC Frontline Scotland programme was produced some years ago on the treatment of adults with ASD within the mental health system. The BBC failed to contest an interdict that was served by Fife Health Board preventing the broadcast of this programme - so it has never been broadcast. The only public airing of this issue was within the Scottish parliament, through several petitions submitted by campaigner Jim Mackie and evidence presented to the parliament's Health committee by parents and Jim Mackie.]

The leaflet summarises the [Autism Rights Briefing Paper](#)  
This link provides links to an [extended set of supporting references](#)

Autism Rights has submitted written evidence to committees of the Scottish parliament:- Autism Rights' [written evidence](#) to the Scottish Parliament's Health and Sport Committee Inquiry into child and adolescent mental health services.

Additional Support for Learning Amendment Bill 2008 - [written evidence to Education Committee Autism Rights'](#) written evidence.

Although the regressive legislation and policy noted in these documents is Scottish, the equivalent of these exist throughout the UK - or will shortly exist, as in the case of the Adult Support and Protection Act. See [HERE](#). Locked out again Tuesday, 16 December 2008 User-led groups have been sidelined from vital discussions that could give social workers sweeping powers to invade disabled people's homes. John Pring reports

The Adult Support and Protection Act has also been subjected to an expert critique by Inclusion Scotland, albeit one that focuses on how it will affect people with physical or sensory disabilities. See [HERE](#). Bill Scott of Inclusion Scotland raises some major questions in respect of legislative provisions affecting disabled people. This article was first published in the journal of the Scottish Legal Action Group (SCOLAG)

Other organisations have also noted their concern. See [Sense Scotland](#)  
See [SAMH Written Evidence](#) on the Bill `Whilst the Scottish Executive clearly believes that the Bill is human rights compliant, we believe that this is arguable.`

Dr. Richard Light is the UK's representative on the committee that drew up the UN Convention. Here he [gives his view](#) on the involvement of disability.

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#### Related Links:

- [Speech, Convention on Modern Liberty, Glasgow](#)  
Fiona Sinclair, Autism Rights

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