Establishing trust

A trusting environment helps people deal with uncertainty and reduces unnecessary anxiety. It respects and upholds people's human rights.

The programme team working with autistic people and people with learning disabilities on leadership and engagement work with Scottish Government did the following things to build up the trust of people with lived experience:

- **Were visible** – the Scottish Government policy managers for example attended weekly Assembly meetings and monthly working group meetings. This made sure that participants had an opportunity to get to know them and develop relationships.

- **Encouraged questioning** - the programme team gave a lot of opportunities and encouraged questions – at meetings and between meetings and in different formats for accessibility such as email and text.

- **Responded to feedback** - if people taking part commented on something then wherever possible the team responded to this and changed things based on the feedback. Someone taking part said that one of the most powerful ways that trust was built within the working groups was not just acting in response to feedback but when people genuinely apologised for mistakes.

- **Being clear about what was and was not possible** – it was important to be clear about what was and was not possible within the scope of the project. People with lived experience were looking for change. It is essential to acknowledge the emotional impact on people who are disappointed and frustrated that more is not possible.

- **Were flexible about meeting times** – the Assembly Programme Lead regularly met people at times that suited them – often later at night suited participants better for a catch up conversation. Working group meetings were scheduled to fit in with people's lives such as childcare commitments.