



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030



National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025 - 2030

Summary of Key Points
(Using sector relevance to summarise)



National Federation of
Voluntary Service Providers
Supporting people with intellectual disability (CLG)

Strategy Purpose

“The National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025–2030 is Ireland’s plan to advance the realisation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We are committed to the principles of the Convention – to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all disabled people and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that disabled people are supported and empowered to live full lives of their own choosing.”

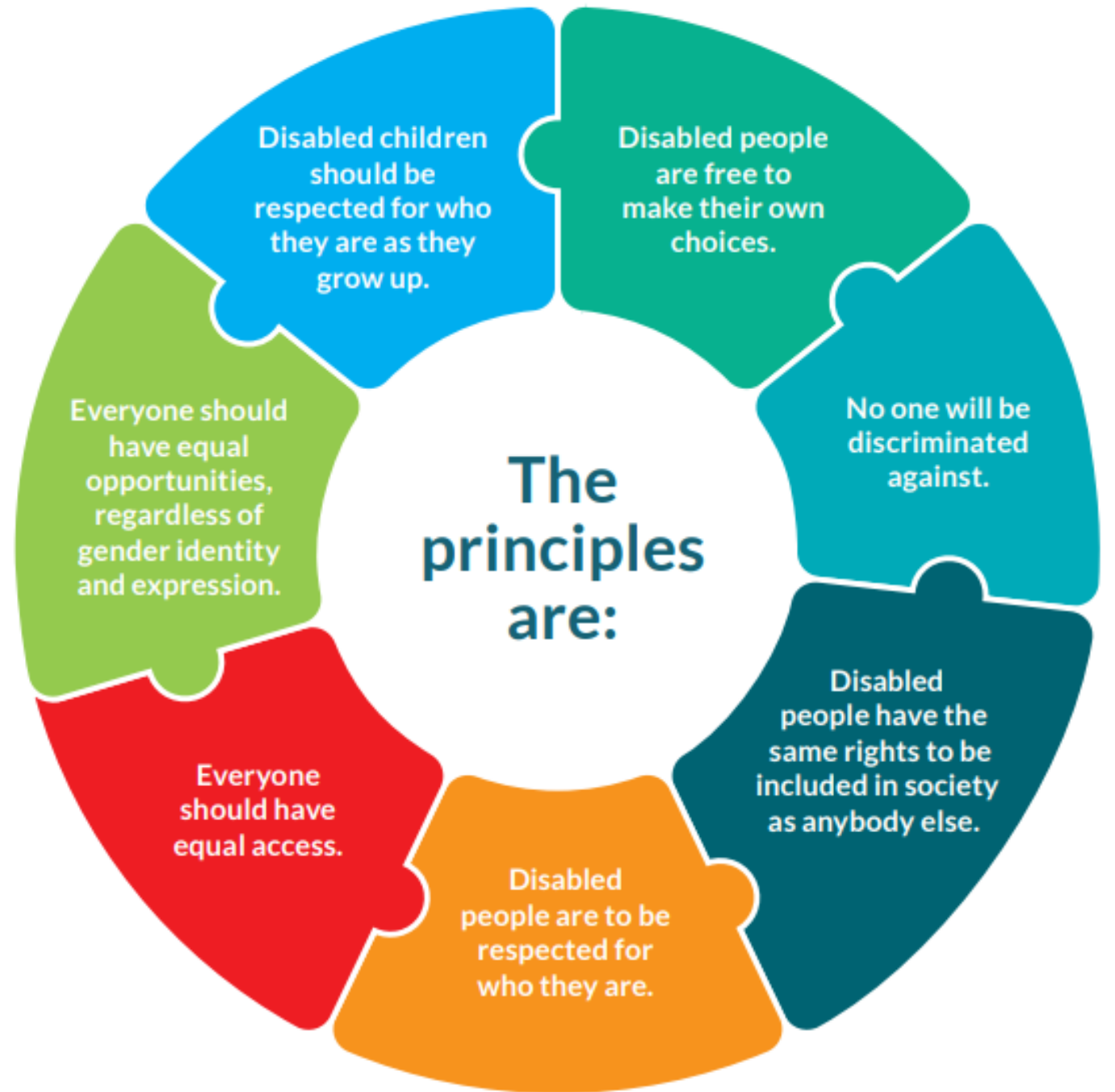


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Strategy Principles

The fundamental principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities establishes a framework are the same principles that underpin the approach taken in all the actions flowing from the National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030.



5 Pillars

Pillar 1: Inclusive Learning and Education

Pillar 2: Employment

Pillar 3: Independent Living and Active Participation in Society

Pillar 4: Wellbeing and Health

Pillar 5: Transport and Mobility





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Pillar 1 - Inclusive Learning and Education

Commitment 1 – Inclusive Education

We will create a more inclusive education system for disabled children and young people that will respect the rights of everyone to choose and access the learning environments that meet their unique needs.

- 1.6 Develop a Roadmap for Inclusive Education to take account of the National Council for Special Education's policy advice on inclusive education and Ireland's commitments under the UNCRPD
- 1.10 Identify which educational supports best meet the needs of disabled students in third level
- 1.12 Expand the roll out of courses for people with intellectual disabilities



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Pillar 1 Inclusive Learning and Education

Commitment 2 – Transitions

We will improve retention rates and progression for disabled children and young people as they deal with transitions within education. We will support their participation and progress as they move from home through early learning and school to further education and enter the world of work or other adult paths.

- 2.1 Develop a national policy on transitions for all children from home into and through early learning and childcare and onto primary school and post-primary school and into further and higher education, supported by a national model of transitions.
- 2.6 Use Universal Design approaches to foster inclusion across all programmes. Information on third-level courses will be readily available and provided in a clear and accessible form. In specific circumstances, courses for people with intellectual disabilities have been developed to facilitate access to higher education.
- 2.7 Support earlier transition planning for school-leavers and their families, who may be considering Day Services as an option, so that enhanced guidance and information can be provided to young people and their families on all post-school options, such as apprenticeships, employment, and further and higher education.

Commitment 3 – Supporting Inclusion

We will help educators and staff to create learning spaces that are friendly and supportive of all disabled children and young people.

- 3.1 Support practice-education opportunities within school settings across professions including SLT and OT facilitating the expansion of higher education places in these disciplines
- 3.3 Develop an integrated professional development plan on inclusive learning and education for teacher education
- 3.5 Progress the development of an implementation plan on foot of the publication of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 review report to address recommendations relating to legislation and policy



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Pillar 2 - Employment

Commitment 4 – Civil and Public Sector

We will maximise opportunities and access for disabled people to get meaningful work in the civil and public sector.

- 4.1 Review and enhance disability inclusion policies and practices including approaches to reasonable accommodation in line with relevant Codes of Practice in the Civil Service
- 4.2 Expand the number and range of work placement opportunities with mentoring support and explore clear pathways to permanent employment in the Civil Service
- 4.4 Strengthen awareness, training and capacity to support employees with disabilities across staff, management and in the deployment of Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs) in the Civil Service



Pillar 2 - Employment

Commitment 5 – Private Sector

We will actively promote the hiring and career advancement of disabled people across the private sector.

- 5.1 Launch and maintain a significant media campaign to change attitudes to employing disabled people, increase awareness and take-up of supports and provide practical information on how to hire, retain and promote a disabled employee
- 5.2 Expand and build on successful programmes like WorkAbility, Employability and the new Work and Access Programme to support disabled people into employment
- 5.6 Promote inclusion and accessibility in entrepreneurship through the Local Enterprise Offices, including adapting content and method of delivery in consultation with Disabled Persons' Organisations, and standardised training to meet the needs of clients with a disability

Commitment 6 – Supporting Disabled People to Work

We will provide the right supports at the right time for disabled people to access work or return to work.

- 6.2 Reform the Disability Allowance Payment and remove anomalies in the means test
- 6.3 Expand supports for disabled people seeking employment by doubling the number of Dedicated Disability Employment Advisors operating in Intreo offices to 62 and continuing to roll out the Employer Charter with a target of signing up 300 employers by end 2025 who will engage proactively in offering employment supports to groups at risk of unemployment, including disabled people
- 6.4 Examine ways, in consultation with disabled people, to make it easier to regain Disability Allowance if employment ceases. We will expand the “no questions asked” route of return to disability payments to 3 years

Pillar 3 – Independent Living and Active Participation in Society

Commitment 7 – Individualised Supports

We will deliver the right individual supports at the right time so that disabled people using disability services can maximise their opportunities to live independently and choose to be actively part of their local communities.

- *7.1 Deliver 1 million additional Personal Assistance hours by 2030 to support greater access to Personal Assistance services and help maximise the independence of disabled people in Ireland*
- *7.3 Complete the independent review of the Personalised Budgets pilot. This will inform the development of an effective model for Personalised Budgets*
- *7.5 Increase availability of respite places and broaden the spectrum of respite provision in supporting disabled people and their families*



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Department of
Children, Disability
and Equality



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Pillar 3 – Independent Living and Active Participation in Society

Commitment 8 – Participation in Social and Cultural Life

We will increase the participation of disabled people in social and cultural life, including in arts, tourism and sport. We will improve accessibility across arts, cultural and sporting events.

- *8.2 Ensure all audio-visual projects funded by Sound and Vision make provision for/provide access services to aid audiences' understanding and enjoyment of those programmes*
- *8.8 Address barriers faced by disabled people when engaging in the Night-Time Economy*
- *8.9 Provide for an increased and richer participation of disabled audiences and creators in arts and cultural events nationwide.*

Commitment 9 – Participation in Public and Political Life

We will enable disabled people to have meaningful engagement in political life and public fora and to actively engage in elections on an equitable basis as citizens.

- *9.1 Deliver inclusivity and capacity building supports and activities for disabled people through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)*
- *9.3 Provide clear, simple and accessible material at electoral events*

Pillar 3 – Independent Living and Active Participation in Society

Commitment 10 – Disability Services and Supports

We will improve access to supports and enable disabled people, particularly those with more complex disabilities, to live a full life in the community.

- *10.1 Update the Disability Capacity Review and provide up to date estimates of unmet need for specialist services and set out the funding and other resources required to address the gap between need and service provision*
- *10.2 Support the delivery of service expansion targets as set out in the Action Plan for Disability Services 2024-2026 and its successor to address the unmet need for services and supports as identified in the Capacity Review*
- *10.3 Publish a Health Service Executive multi-annual capital strategy for specialist disability services which will provide the infrastructure required to expand supports and services in line with the needs set out in the Capacity Review and the capital funding available under the National Development Plan*
- *10.4 Develop a new vision and reform strategy for specialist disability supports and services for 2030 to ensure that services are progressively more person-led, sustainable and cost-effective*
- *10.5 Support delivery of sustainable, efficient, and effective services for disabled people into the future by ensuring high quality financial governance, data and oversight arrangements and by addressing cost drivers in the delivery of services*

Pillar 3 – Independent Living and Active Participation in Society

Commitment 11 – Housing

We will enhance the effective delivery of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People (2022-2027).

- *11.1 Establish the Regional Interagency Group structure to improve coordination between the HSE and Local Authorities at the local level. This will help Local Authorities and the HSE to deliver coordinated service responses in each area*
- *11.3 Advance the delivery of appropriate housing for the purposes of specialist disability residential services, providing additional residential places aligned with the HSE National Service Plan and informed by HSE service needs. This will include advancing de-congregation in line with Article 19 of the UNCRPD*
- *11.4 Finish a Cost Benefit Analysis of lifetime adaptable Universal Design homes, including UD Home and UD Home+ dwellings*

Commitment 12 – Local Authorities

We will support the inclusion of disabled people in their local communities by continuing to improve our services and by creating accessible environments where disabled people can live independently and participate fully in all aspects of community life.

- *12.1 Ensure that there is a dedicated full-time post for an Access and Inclusion Officer in each Local Authority, in line with obligations under the Disability Act 2005*
- *12.3 Conduct an audit across all Local Authorities regarding current status on disability-related matters, such as who is representing disabled people on Public Partnership Networks; access officers; information on accessibility of public realm; Universal Design housing*
- *12.4 Local Authorities will develop and implement a plan for conducting walkability audits of towns and cities with a population greater than 5,000*

Pillar 3 – Independent Living and Active Participation in Society

Commitment 13 – Criminal Justice System

We will ensure that disabled people have access to justice on an equal basis with others and that they do not unnecessarily enter the Criminal Justice system. We will improve the experience of disabled people in custody accessing services.

- *13.1 Provide better coordinated support for disabled people interacting with the Irish Prison Service by developing clear pathways for access to primary, community, mental health and disability services, between the Health Service Executive and criminal justice agencies.*
- *13.2 Consider how the Registered Intermediaries Scheme could be promoted to increase awareness about its availability to support those with communication difficulties to engage with the system and have effective access to justice*



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Pillar 4 – Health and Wellbeing

Commitment 14 – Accessible Health Services

We will create a more accessible and inclusive mainstream health service for disabled people.

- *14.3 Ensure that disabled people and disability service providers are included and actively represented in the engagement structures and processes being established as part of Health Regions implementation and the promotion of population-based planning. These structures include Regional Patient and Service User Forums and Voluntary Organisation Forums*

Commitment 15 – Safeguarding

We will ensure that disabled people are treated with respect and dignity, have their welfare promoted and receive support in an environment in which every effort is made to promote welfare and prevent abuse

- *15.1 Complete an expert-driven, non-statutory safeguarding exercise to identify learnings from the Farrelly Commission's findings to inform present day safeguarding policies and practices*
- *15.2 Develop a new policy on adult safeguarding in the health and social care sector.*



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Pillar 4 – Health and Wellbeing

Commitment 16 – Health Promotion and Wellbeing

We will enhance disabled people’s overall health and wellbeing.

- 16.2 Design and deliver Physical and Mental Health initiatives that are inclusive and accessible to disabled people of all ages, including the provision of counselling supports for disabled people undergoing treatment in health services. Ensure that accessible health programmes, such as Healthy Ireland campaigns, have disabled people specifically incorporated into their design

Commitment 17 – Youth Mental Health

We will ensure that all disabled children and young people are supported to access the mental health services they need.

- 17.1 Ensure equitable and timely access for young disabled people to Child and Youth Mental Health Services
- 17.2 Introduce a “Single Point of Access” policy across mental health services, ensuring that onward referral pathways are clear and clearly signposted
- 17.3 Ensure that services are appropriate to support intersectional issues such as disabled Travellers and LGBTIQ+ young disabled people

Pillar 4 – Health and Wellbeing

Commitment 18 – Supporting all Disabled Children and their Families

We will achieve a quality, accessible, equitable and timely service for all disabled children and their families based on their needs.

- 18.1 Ensure better integration through the rollout across the health regions of a single HSE point of access to direct children and families to the appropriate service
- 18.2 Deliver actions to ensure more timely access to primary care therapy services for people with mild to moderate disabilities by progressing the three Workstreams under the joint Programmatic Approach to Address Primary Care Waiting List Management

Commitment 19 – Oral Health

We will ensure that disabled children and adults can benefit from improved access to oral healthcare.

- 19.2 Address poorer levels of oral health, particularly among those with intellectual disabilities, by improving access to mainstream oral healthcare.
- 19.3 Commence reorientation of the Health Service Executive Oral Healthcare Service to lead on oral health promotion programmes and to provide dental services to those who are unable to access care in a general dental practice setting
- 19.4 Progress an initiative that will focus on assessing oral healthcare needs for those in residential settings and develop training materials for associated healthcare workers to enable improved support to be provided for oral health care as part of personal care for these residents.

Pillar 4 – Health and Wellbeing

Commitment 20 – Screening Services

We will ensure that disabled people are made aware of the supports available to them in accessing the National Screening Service through improved targeted promotion.

- 20.1 Provide disability equality training for all National Screening Service staff and tailored training for access officers who play a key role in liaising with and supporting disabled people to access the service. Access officers liaise with disabled people, carers, and family members to facilitate accommodations to appointments e.g longer appointments, access

Commitment 21 – Audiology Services

We will ensure that disabled children and adults who develop hearing loss can benefit from appropriate and timely interventions.

- 21.2 Progress the appropriate linkage between public and private provision of care, including hearing tests and hearing aid provision, to maximise positive outcomes for patients. This will boost capacity and ensure waiting list times for early assessment are reduced.

Pillar 5 – Transport and Mobility

Commitment 22 - Seamless and Accessible Journeys in Urban and Rural Areas

We will take a “whole-of-journey” approach applying Universal Design principles in the development of infrastructure and services to improve the accessibility of our transport system across the country.

- 22.4 Consult and engage with disabled people in the design and implementation of transport infrastructure where it interacts with the associated built environment, ensuring application of a Universal Design

Commitment 23 – Personal Mobility

We will support those who cannot use or access any public transport, or who may need private transport to get to and from public transport, by providing disabled people with enhanced personal mobility options.

- 23.3 Support the upgrade of vehicles for specialist disability service providers to ensure that vehicles are adequately maintained.

Strategic Focus Networks

Over the timeframe of the First Programme Plan of Action 2025-2026, there will be a range of Strategic Focus Network Summits to bring additional strategic focus to developments in the following areas:



**Digital and
Assistive
Technology**



**Cost of
disability**



Intersectionality

Focus Areas for 2025–2026

Digital & Assistive Tech

- Lead: HSE
- Goal: Review and enhance access to digital and assistive technologies in a person-centred, integrated way across government.

Cost of Disability

- Lead: Dept of Social Protection
- Goal: Develop whole-of-government solutions to address the financial burden of disability, informed by: Indecon Report on the Cost of Disability in Ireland & ESRI Report on Adjusting Estimates of Poverty for the Cost of Disability (2025)

Intersectionality

- Lead: DCED
- Goal: Address how overlapping identities (e.g. ethnicity, gender, social class) intersect with disability and create compounded disadvantage.

Strategic Focus Networks

Purpose

- Facilitate strategic engagement between government departments, agencies, Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs), civil society, and subject experts.
- Host one-day summits to
 - Share learning and good practice.
 - Strategize on policy and service improvements
 - Identify key actions for inclusion in future Programme Plans.

Outcomes

Each summit will produce a briefing paper with

- ❖ Key learnings
- ❖ Policy recommendations
- ❖ Proposed actions (e.g. schemes, legislative changes)

These will inform future Programme Plans (2027–2028 and 2029–2030).

Oversight Structures



1. Cabinet Committee on Disability

- Provides democratic oversight.
- Receives updates via the Senior Officials Group coordinated by the Department of the Taoiseach.

2. Delivery and Monitoring Committee

- Oversees development and delivery of strategy commitments.
- Co-chaired by the Taoiseach and Tánaiste (meets twice annually).
- Includes representation from Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs).

3. Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters

- Supports broader political and democratic oversight.