



**INCLUSION IRELAND**

National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability

# **Local Elections 2019:**

## **A manifesto for equality and rights**

**April 2019**

**This document is written in font 12 Verdana in line with Inclusion Ireland plain English guidelines**

# About Inclusion Ireland

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Established in 1961, Inclusion Ireland is a national, rights based advocacy organisation that works to promote the rights of people with an intellectual disability.

The vision of Inclusion Ireland is that of people with an intellectual disability living and participating in the community with equal rights.

Inclusion Ireland's work is underpinned by the values of dignity, inclusion, social justice, democracy and autonomy and we use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to guide our work.

## Introduction

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Ireland is holding local elections on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2019. People with disabilities, their families and interested community members have an opportunity to elect local councillors to represent them and their communities.

Elected representatives have an opportunity to show that people with disabilities matter as citizens.

Inclusion Ireland would like candidates to work toward promoting the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities in their roles as local councillors by advocating for the positions outlined in this manifesto.

1. Housing and planning
2. Transport
3. Accessibility
4. Participation
5. Employment

Across all its activities, local authorities also have an obligation to have regard to the Public Sector Duty under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014.

The Public Sector Duty requires local authorities to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of its employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by their policies and plans.

People with disabilities have the right to a public service that protects, respects and promotes their human rights in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Local government should implement the Public Sector Duty in line with the guidelines developed by IHREC<sup>1</sup> and engage people with disabilities and other external stakeholders in the ongoing assessment and planning of council services from a human rights perspective.

As a first action, local councillors should make sure their local authority sets out how they will advance their public sector duty when they are developing their strategic plans for this year.

# 1. Equality-proof housing and planning

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The UNCRPD (Art 19) reaffirms the right of people with disabilities to live independently and be included in the community with the supports needed.

However, there are around 2300 people with disabilities still living in large institutional settings around the country<sup>2</sup>, over 5000 more living in residential services<sup>3</sup>, many of which offer limited choice or genuine community inclusion, and many thousands more adults with an intellectual disability living at home with ageing parents or siblings and limited supports<sup>4</sup>. There is also a significant number of people inappropriately placed in nursing homes.

As well as this, people with disabilities are more likely to experience homelessness. While 13.5% of the general population has a disability, people with disabilities represent 27% of the homeless population<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2019/03/IHREC\\_Public\\_Sector\\_Duty\\_Final\\_Eng\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2019/03/IHREC_Public_Sector_Duty_Final_Eng_WEB.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> At end 2017, TTMO implementation group, Progress made under Time to Move on from Congregated Settings 2012- 2017 infographic.

<sup>3</sup> Health Research Board (2018). Report of the National Intellectual Disability Database 2017

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> CSO (2017). Census 2016

A lack of accessible housing and the prevalence of institutional models of service provision are key barriers in the way of the right of persons with disabilities to live independently in the community.

### **What we want:**

People with disabilities will have access to a good supply of accessible accommodation in which they can live independent and well connected lives within the community.

### **Inclusion Ireland asks:**

- Work with people with disabilities and all relevant stakeholders to draft, implement and monitor a strategic plan for housing people with a disability, in line with the recommendations of the National Housing Strategy for people with a disability.
- Collaborate with people with disabilities, the HSE and the Housing Agency to assess the housing needs of people living in large, institutionalised settings and identify solutions to meet their needs.
- Ensure that all new-build social housing for which local authorities are responsible will be universally designed and accessible to all citizens in line with the Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland published by the NDA.<sup>6</sup>
- As a first step, commit to a minimum of 7% of all social housing stock to be suitable for independent occupation by people with disabilities.
- Promote the development of accessible housing within the private rented sector.

## 2. Make transport accessible

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Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) places an obligation on States Parties to ensure persons with disabilities can access transport in urban and rural areas on an equal basis with others and to take measures to identify and eliminate barriers to accessible transport.

Accessible transport is a key requirement for people with disabilities in order to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://universaldesign.ie/Built-Environment/Housing/>

A recently published report by the Joint Committee on Transport, Tourism and Sport<sup>7</sup> outlines the role that local authorities should play in ensuring accessible bus and coach stops nationwide.

**What we want:**

People with disabilities will be able to travel independently within the community in transport that is accessible and affordable

**Inclusion Ireland asks:**

- Support and promote planning that facilitates linkage between different forms of transport
- Promote planning and design that facilitates easy access to public transport transfer points by people with disabilities e.g. good distribution of disabled parking spaces and appropriate ramps and kerbs for pavements

## 3. Ensure accessibility

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Persons with intellectual disabilities have a right to access public services in a manner that is understandable and accessible to them. As well as their Public Sector Duty, local authorities have obligations under the Disability Act 2005 to ensure that their services are accessible to people with disabilities in line with Article 9 of the UNCRPD.

Accessibility should not be limited to physical access but should include accessible information as well in line with Article 21 of the UNCRPD.

**What we want:**

People with disabilities can participate in the everyday life and activities of their communities

**Inclusion Ireland asks:**

- Implement the National Disability Authority 'Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies' and the NDA Accessibility Toolkit.
- Ensure that its public services and facilities for arts, sport or leisure are universally designed and accessible to all citizens

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<sup>7</sup>[https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_transport\\_tourism\\_and\\_sport/reports/2018/2018-11-14\\_accessibility-of-public-transport-for-people-with-disabilities\\_en.pdf](https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_transport_tourism_and_sport/reports/2018/2018-11-14_accessibility-of-public-transport-for-people-with-disabilities_en.pdf)

- The planning and design of public buildings and public spaces will be informed by consultation and ongoing engagement with people with disabilities
- Promote and facilitate the installation of Changing Places facilities
- Ensure access to all outdoor recreation facilities including beaches, lakes, trails, and play equipment that can be used by people with disabilities.
- Ensure that print and digital information about all services provided is available in accessible formats that are easy to read and understand.
- Facilitate easy access to documentation on proposed plans or projects that are subject to public consultation
- Proactively promote access and participation by people with disabilities in the arts, culture, sport and recreation opportunities that it facilitates

## 4. Promote participation

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People with disabilities have the right to participate in public and political life and in decisions that impact on their lives. However, they continue to face barriers to their full participation on an equal basis with others. Lack of accessible information, negative or stereotyped attitudes, physical and environmental barriers all act as barriers to participation and inclusion.

To comply with articles 29 and 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, local authorities must actively promote an environment that supports and enables participation.<sup>8</sup>

### **What we want:**

People with disabilities will influence and inform the ongoing development and improvement of the local authority's services

### **Inclusion Ireland asks:**

- Actively engage people with disabilities and their representatives in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of its services and facilities

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-29-participation-in-political-and-public-life.html>  
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-30-participation-in-cultural-life-recreation-leisure-and-sport.html>

- Facilitate the participation of people with disabilities on the LCDC and promote the delivery of capacity building and other supports under the SICAP programme
- Train its staff to facilitate meaningful consultation and engagement with people with disabilities. This work should be done in line with the analysis and recommendations in the HSE’s guidelines on the effective participation of people with disabilities in planning and decision-making<sup>9</sup>

## 5. Support employment

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Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities affirms the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others.

People with disabilities experience multiple barriers to accessing employment, including financial barriers, negative societal attitudes, environmental barriers, the education system and lack of opportunity.

Just 36% of people with disabilities of working age and 17% of people with an intellectual disability are in employment<sup>10</sup> and this indicates a societal problem that needs urgent addressing using the range of strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities.

The National Disability Inclusion Strategy includes a target to increase the public sector employment target of persons with disabilities from 3% to 6% by 2024.

The National Disability Authority publishes an annual report on public sector compliance. The most recent data available show that in 2017, public bodies reported that 3.5% of employees working in the public sector are people with disabilities<sup>11</sup>.

### **What we want:**

People with disabilities will feel valued and supported as employees of the county council

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/effective-participation-in-decision-making-final.pdf> <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/effective-participation-in-decision-making-implementation-for-hse-staff.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> CSO (2017). Census 2016.

<sup>11</sup> NDA (2019). 2017 Report on Compliance with Part 5 of the Disability Act on the Employment of People with Disabilities in the Public Sector

**Inclusion Ireland asks:**

- Fully implement the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for persons with disabilities
- Ensure that workforce planning and recruitment works towards a target whereby 6% of its whole time equivalent workforce across all employment grades will be people with disabilities

**For further information, contact;  
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