



Making Equality & Rights Real

A toolkit for setting up
Equality & Human Rights Committees
in Disability Services

What means

Equality is treating
everyone the same
regardless of who they
are

being treated
as well as
other people
are

Having same opportunity
as everyone else

Fairness

- Everyone is treated
fairly

Respect my decisions
and my views - Don't
need others agreement!
is my Decision, My view,
my opinion.

We can all arrive
at the same outcome
although we start
from different points.

as everyone
understand that
more help

equality

to me....

BEING LISTENED
TO

Everyone is individual
and different and gets
the support they need

People with DISAB
SHOULD HAVE J
HOW MANY do

People with disability
Should be Represented
IN DAIL

POLITICAL RIGHTS

What does Equality
mean to me

TREATED
FAIRLY

To be able to speak up for
yourself

Right to speak for yourself

Dignity

Equality

independence



Contents

Introduction.....	6
The Steering Committee.....	7
Biographies.....	9
The Research	12
The Terms of Reference	14
The Training Module.....	21
Values and Next Steps.....	25



Introduction



Many disability services around the country have what are called 'Rights Committees' in place.



These Rights Committees usually look at rights restrictions in services and say whether they are OK or not.

However, there are no national guidelines for how these committees should work.



Inclusion Ireland wanted to change this by running a project that will develop good-practice guidelines for these committees.



This project aimed to produce a toolkit that could be used to set up 'Equality and Rights Committees' in all disability services.



These new Equality and Rights Committees would then promote equality and human rights in services.

Background to the Steering Committee



Throughout this project Inclusion Ireland tried to make sure that people with intellectual disabilities were at the centre of the project.



It was decided that a Steering Committee – made up of people with intellectual disabilities - would be set up.

It was very important that the project listened to different voices and experiences from around the country.

An application form titled "APPLICATION FORM" is shown. It has four main sections: "Name" with a person icon, "Address" with a house icon, "Education" with a person at a desk icon, and "Work" with a person at a desk icon. The form is white with blue text and icons.

The recruitment process was treated like any typical job application. People were encouraged to send in an application showing:

- Their experiences
- Why they wanted to be involved
- Why they would be a good fit for the Steering Committee.



People would also be paid for being part of the Steering Committee.

An advertisement was placed on the Inclusion Ireland website and on Facebook and Twitter.



In the advertisement it was explained what kind of experience was needed for the committee. It was important to get individuals with lived experience of:

- **Living/attending disability services**
- **Being involved in self-advocacy**
- **Working as part of a group**



People were encouraged to apply by whatever means they were most comfortable with. This included by:



- **Email or post**
- **Painting or a poster**
- **A video**
- **Coming in to meet us for a chat**

Almost 60 people applied.



49 were people with a disability. These were people with an intellectual disability from all over the country.

7 individuals were chosen to be on the Steering Committee based upon their applications.



This Steering Committee has driven the project from the beginning and they have developed this document.

Steering Committee Biographies



Paul Alford

Paul is a self-advocate and staff member of Inclusion Ireland. He used to live in disability services for most of his life and now lives in his own apartment independently with some staff support hours each week. Paul has worked in Inclusion Ireland for 12 years. His work includes facilitating self-advocacy groups, facilitating workshops and proofreading documents to make sure they are in easy-to-read format. Paul is also part of the Anti-Bullying Group, a member of the Inclusion Ireland Self-Advocacy Subcommittee, and of the East Coast Self-Advocacy Subcommittee. Paul is also an author, and has just released his autobiography. Paul has said he wanted to be involved in this project in order to bring more rights and equality to people living in disability services.

Christina Burke

Christina Burke is from Galway. Christina has been involved in self-advocacy for many years and has much experience in standing up for her rights. She is an elected member of the National Platform of Self-Advocates. She is also a member of the Anti-Bullying Group, The National Council, The Service User Council and the Irish Research network (IRN). Christine has said that the reason she wants to be involved in this project is to speak up for herself and other people with disabilities.

Gerard Byrne

Gerard Byrne is from Kilkenny City and attends day services on a weekly basis. He also avails of respite services in the area. Gerard is a DJ on our campus radio station 'Dreamtime Radio' and also works part-time for Kilkenny Co. Council. He is chairperson of the Advocacy Committee in his service and has been actively involved with Special Olympics Ireland for over 15 years. He wanted to be involved in this project because Gerard believes that everyone should be treated as equals and with respect and dignity. Gerard hopes to see all people including those with disabilities treated as equals in the future.

Úna Coates

Úna lives in Dublin and is attending disability services. She has a lot of experience of being an advocate. She currently sits on the Service User Council in her service where she represents herself and other service users. Úna completed a certificate in Citizenship and Advocacy in UCD and did a full-time course in Contemporary Living in Trinity College. Úna has said she wanted to become involved in this project because she works very hard as an advocate and wants to keep learning so she can help more people.

Fiona Gallagher

Fiona lives in a community house in County Cavan with other residents. Fiona has years of experience being a self-advocate in her service. Once a month she attends a peer advocacy group with other residents, where she is the secretary for that group. Fiona also attends college twice a week and wanted to become involved with this project so she could learn more about rights, self-advocacy and equality for people with disabilities.

Kathryn Griffin

Kathryn is from Dublin. She is currently participating in a training programme in her service and has completed similar programmes in the past. Kathryn has experience being involved in groups in various organisations such as the National Learning Network, Trinity College Dublin, ALPS and Ballyroan Community Centre. She believes self-advocacy makes things more equal and inclusive for people with disabilities and has given her the opportunity to advocate and speak up for herself and others. Kathryn has said she wanted to become involved in this project because she has a real interest in human rights and so she could learn to help others advocate for themselves.

Martin Dooher

Martin Dooher is from Galway. He has lived in disability services for most of his life but moved into his own home 5 years ago with support from his service. Martin has a lot of experience being an advocate. He is a member of a lot of groups such as the National Platform of Self-Advocates and the National Advocacy Council. He believes it is very important we all speak up ourselves and for others. Martin likes being an advocate and is proud of all the work he has done over the years. Martin has said he wanted to be involved in this project because he enjoys working with others and changing things to make people's lives better.

Research

The Steering Committee carried out research to find out more about Rights Committees in services.



The survey

Inclusion Ireland's research officer and the Steering Committee sent out a survey to find out information on Rights Committees across Ireland. We wanted to know:

- Where are they established?
- Who is involved?
- How are they working?



How we did the survey

Inclusion Ireland's research officer looked at reports on rights committees from Ireland and other countries.



The research officer told the Steering Committee about the key issues from these reports.

The Steering Committee decided what questions to ask.

HIQA agreed to send the survey to all the disability service providers in Ireland.

Using the evidence

The research officer and the Steering Committee looked at the survey results.

It was discussed how the results could be used to make recommendations to improve rights committees.



Terms of Reference for Equality and Rights Committees in Disability Services



About Equality and Rights Committees



Every service should have an Equality and Rights committee.

The committee should abide by an Equality and Human Rights statement.



This means the committees should serve to promote equality and rights in the service.

This means doing more than just looking at rights restrictions.



There should be no more than 12 members on these committees.

The chairperson needs to be an external member of the committee.



The committee should represent no more than 40 – 50 people who use the service.

If there are more than 50 people using the service then there needs to be more committees to represent them.

Who should be on these committees?

There needs to be an equal amount of persons with disabilities, staff from the service and external members.

For example:

- 4 persons with disabilities
- 4 staff members
- 4 external members



1) Persons with disabilities:

Persons with disabilities could be elected from parts of the service to sit on the committees.



People could be elected from self-advocacy committees to then sit on the Equality and Rights Committees.



Persons with disabilities sitting on these committees should receive the support they need to sit on them.

2) Staff members from within the service:

There should be no General Managers on the committee.

The committee can report to managers but their work should not be influenced by them.



Staff members that sit on the committees could be:

- Speech and Language Therapists
- Psychologists
- Occupational Therapists (OT)
- Staff reps (such as Team Leads)



3) Who should the external members be?

They should be people who are:

- Experienced in disability work
- Part of the community
- HSE professionals

There should be at least 2 independent external advocates. Other external members could be:



- Family members
- People working in disability or experienced in disability issues

One of the external members needs to be the Chairperson.

What should the Chairperson do?

They should:

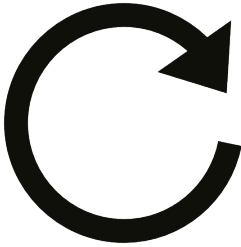


- Chair the meetings
- Follow the agenda
- Be independent
- Facilitate and empower people to speak
- Keep order and make sure everyone is heard



How should these committees work?

The Equality and Rights Committee should meet once per month.



Some members of the Equality and Rights Committee should rotate every 2 years.

Elected service users should rotate every 2 years:

- Half should rotate and the other half should stay
- This gives a good balance of new people and experience to the committee



Service users should be updated on the work of the committee.



Service users should be actively supported to bring issues and ideas to the committee.

The Equality and Rights Committees should communicate with other committees in the service.

These could be:

- Advocacy and self-advocacy committees
- Staff committees





How can people be supported to bring issues to the Equality and Rights Committee?

If someone has an issue they should be able to send in a form to the committee.

These forms should be in easy-to-read format.



People should be able to get support from staff members or key workers to bring issues to the committee.



How should people be supported to sit on these committees?

Each person should have the right individual supports for them to take part.

Each person has different support needs.

These could be:

- **A support worker**
- **A sign language interpreter**
- **Audiotapes of minutes**
- **Communication aids**



All information should be in accessible format for people.



What ways should the Equality and Rights Committee tell people about their work?

The Equality and Rights Committee should make a report on their work 3 times a year.

This report should be in an accessible format.



This report should be made available on the service website.



The Equality and Rights Committee should send out easy-to-read information to the residents in the service.



The Equality and Rights Committee should also report to other committees in the service.

The image features three hands of different skin tones (dark brown, medium brown, and light brown) reaching upwards from the bottom. Each hand is holding a sticky note. The top-left sticky note is yellow and has the word 'Equality' written in red cursive. The top-right sticky note is green and has the word 'Choice' written in black cursive. The bottom-center sticky note is purple and has the word 'Independence' written in black cursive. The background is plain white.

Equality

Choice

Independence

Equality & Rights Committees Train the Trainer Module



Who can be a peer trainer?

A peer trainer is someone who uses his or her experience to inform and support other people.

The learners who participate in this course should identify as having an intellectual or learning disability or as having additional support needs.

The learners should be interested in delivering training to other people with support needs.

There are 3 modules: A module is a name for a part of a training plan.

1. Equality & Human Rights
2. Running a Rights Committee
3. Training Skills

What will I learn on this course?

The peer training programme will give learners the following skills:

- What equality & human rights are
- How to run a committee
- What a trainer does
- How to give a training workshop
- How to use training tools like PowerPoint
- How to check the training went well



Module 1: Equality & Human Rights



What will I learn?

This module will look at what equality & human rights are and why they matter.

Learners will find out:

- What human rights are?
- How can human rights be protected?
- What is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?
- What is equality?
- How to improve services in human-rights



Module 2: Running a Rights Committee

This module will look at the terms-of-reference drawn up by the Steering Committee of the Equality & Human Rights project.

Learners will find out:

- What does a good committee look like?
- How does a good committee communicate?
- What work should a good committee do?
- How should a committee be supported?



Module 3: Training Skills

What will I learn?



This module will look at skills you need to be a peer trainer.

Learners will find out:

- What a trainer does
- The skills needed (e.g. controlling nerves, presentation skills)
- How to decide what training to give
- How to give a training workshop
- How to speak in front of a group
- How to use training tools like PowerPoint
- How to check the training went well
- How to communicate well



Training length: 2 days

Training Delivery: The training will be delivered in a number of ways

- Using powerpoint
- Conversation
- Practical skills
- Role Play



On completion, all learners will receive a certificate of achievement.

Values & Next Steps



Agreeing on the Values



Inclusion Ireland held 3 Training events.

We asked people who came to our events what values mattered to them and this is what they said.

Respect/Dignity

Independence

Choice

Honesty

Fun



Equality



Participation



Diversity



Inclusion



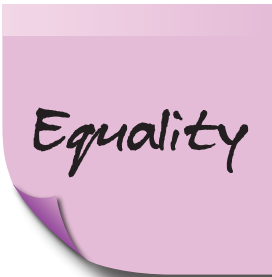
Friendship/Family

Next Steps



The Equality and Rights Committees can deal with issues that people bring to them.

The Equality and Rights Committees could also decide to use values in their work.



Under each value, the committee could identify the equality and rights issues that come up in the service.

The Equality and Rights Committees could look at ways to use the values to address the issues.



More information about values is available at the end of this book.



More information

Equality & Human Rights

Irish Human Rights & Equality
Commission

www.ihrec.ie

Values

Values Lab

www.values-lab.ie

Inclusion Ireland Equality
& Human Rights Statement

www.inclusionireland.ie/about-us

Human Rights & Equality Training

Legal Capacity Training

www.legalcapacity.ie









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made with
photosymbols

This Easy to Read guide was proof-read for its accessibility by people with disabilities.



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