








**INCLUSION IRELAND**

**National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability**

# Looking Back on 2017



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# Introduction

Inclusion Ireland promotes equality and human rights for people with intellectual disabilities.

Equality means having the same chances and rights as everyone else.

Values are things we think are very important in our work.

We use our values to help explain our work.

Inclusion Ireland's values are:



## Dignity

Dignity is about respecting and seeing the value of each person with a disability.



## Inclusion

Inclusion is about people taking part and being involved in community life and understanding that everyone is different.



## Social Justice

Social Justice is about everyone in society getting fair resources like money and services so they can live the life that they choose.



## Democracy

Democracy is about having an equal say and having your voice heard in making your own decisions.



## Autonomy

Autonomy is about making choices in your own life and making things happen your way.

In this report we will use our values to explain the work we did in 2017.



# CEO Message

In last year's Annual Report, I said that Inclusion Ireland had developed an Equality & Human Rights Statement which sets the values of dignity, autonomy, social justice, democracy and inclusion to work towards the full equality of people with intellectual disabilities. This was the first full year that our work was underpinned by these values and it has been exciting to see how those values have found expression in our work and our Annual Report for 2017 reflects those values in action.

Among many examples were the Changing Places campaign through which we advance dignity, our 'Equality & Rights Committee' project which promoted inclusion, our campaign on the cost of disability and poverty which addresses social justice, the work we have done on Working Group 3 of the Transforming Lives Programme to make services in the HSE work better for everyone, which is about democracy, and our work with other partners on advancing our 'Essential Principles of Personal Budgets', that lends itself to autonomy.

We have brought those values into our work, which is nationwide courtesy of our bases in Cork,

Offaly and Sligo. In 2017, we reached almost 1,500 persons through information sessions and we reached almost 2,000 persons through direct inquiries.

We used our values to advocate for the equality and rights of people with an intellectual disability in 28 written submissions to a broad range of state agencies and other bodies such as the HSE, Departments of Public Expenditure and Reform, Health & Justice, the Policing Authority, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Citizen's Assembly and the National Disability Authority.

We continue to use communications channels to advance equality and rights with appearances on national television and radio, and in print media. On social media, we saw a growth of 28% in engagement on Facebook during the 11 months from Jan 1st to December 1st.

I would like to extend my thanks to all Inclusion Ireland staff for their hard work and commitment, and the Board for their support and guidance in 2017.

*Paddy Connolly*



# Chairperson Message

As Chairperson of the Board of Inclusion Ireland, I would like to thank the staff and the CEO of the organisation for another year of absolute commitment and dogged determination to improve the lives of people with disabilities and their families.

Inclusion Ireland CEO, Paddy Connolly, has brought clarity, cohesion and consistency to the work of the organisation. This is not always an easy space to occupy and I applaud Paddy and his team for their bravery and perseverance in staying true to the values, human rights and equality statements underpinning the work of the organisation.

I would also like to thank my fellow Board members who give their time and effort freely and generously to ensure the good governance of the organisation. The board works hard to uphold the high standards we have set ourselves through our values.

The organisation has gone through enormous change over the past number of years and has become a rights based organisation with a clear mandate in terms of its work. I would like to pay tribute to those early pioneers in this field of work as they laid the groundwork

for the space we now occupy today. We have travelled a long road and I want to sincerely thank those who have paved the way for us today to confidently stand and ask for the same rights as every other Irish citizen to be afforded to our Irish citizens with intellectual disabilities.

I am very proud to have been involved with Inclusion Ireland as a Board member and honoured to have held the position of Chairperson.

We are on a new journey that dictates new conversations that focus on the commonalities we share as individuals rather than the specialties that separate us.

I am full of hope for the future if we can stay true to our values and our beliefs in the humanity we all share and our dependence on each other to ensure all our rights are fulfilled in legislation and maybe just as importantly our actions and interactions with each other.

*Kathryn O'Shea*

# Dignity



## Accessible Information

Everyone has a right to information.

Accessible information can support people to understand information they need to take part in society.



One way to make information easy to understand is to make it in Easy to Read format.

This report is in Easy to Read format.



The writing is large.

The sentences are short.

Photos and symbols help people to understand the words.



Inclusion Ireland thinks Easy to Read information is important.

We try to make as many of our documents as we can in Easy to Read format.





Sometimes we help other organisations to make Easy to Read information.

In 2017, we worked with the Housing Agency to make Easy to Read documents about housing options and grants for people with disabilities.



We also supported the Housing Agency to have focus groups with people with intellectual disabilities to make the documents, and check that they were Easy to Read and to understand.

We met with the Workplace Relations Commission to support them to make their website more accessible for everyone.

## Changing Places



Changing Places toilets are accessible toilets and changing spaces for people with disabilities.

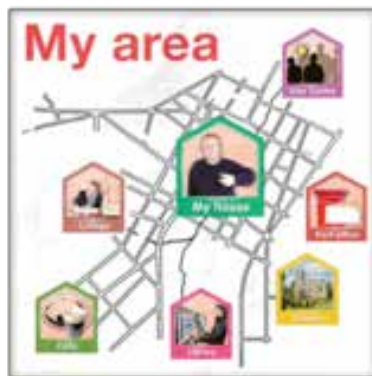
They give people with disabilities and people who support them more space to use the toilet and to change clothes if they need to.



They also have extra facilities like a hoist and an adult size changing bench so that people can use the toilet more easily than other toilets.

Changing Places toilets support people to get out into the community and enjoy visiting places.

There are only some Changing Places toilets in Ireland.



During 2017 Inclusion Ireland worked with other organisations and interested people to help the Changing Places campaign to grow so that there will be many more Changing Places around the country in the future.



## Tusla



Tusla is the Government agency that deals with children and families.

Inclusion Ireland wrote to Tusla in 2017.



In the letter we described how children with disabilities are not getting the same access to support by Tusla, that other children are getting.

In the letter we wrote stories as examples of how children with disabilities are being treated unfairly.



Inclusion Ireland wants the government agency working on children and family issues to be responsible for protecting the rights of children with disabilities.

Children with disabilities should be treated with the same dignity as all other children.

Tusla should look after and give the same services to children with disabilities in the same way they look after all other children in Ireland.

# Inclusion

## IHREC Project 2017

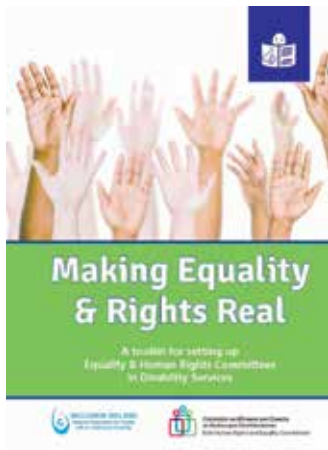


Inclusion Ireland completed a project funded by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) in 2017.

This project looked at setting up Equality and Rights Committees in disability services around the country.



A Steering Committee directed the project. The Steering Committee was made up of 7 people with lived experience of intellectual disability, who attend disability services.



The Steering Committee made a booklet on how to set up these Equality and Rights Committees. People with intellectual disabilities gave training to their peers in equality and human rights.



The booklet was launched on the 5th of December by Emily Logan, the Chief Commissioner of IHREC.

## The Ploughing Championships 2017



Inclusion Ireland and the National Platform of Self Advocates attended the National Ploughing Championships in Tullamore in September 2017. The Ploughing Championships is a large outdoor event. Many people from all over the country visit it to see stands of lots of different companies and organisations.



Over three days, we had conversations with over 400 people about the rights of persons with disabilities.



The right to work and to equal pay was most important to people we spoke to.

Having support to live in the community was very important too.

We visited and shared an information pack with over 25 organisations.



People signed a petition at Inclusion Ireland's stand at the National Ploughing Championships.

We sent the petition to Minister Finian McGrath asking him to ratify the United Nations Convention on Rights of People with Disability.



## Adult Safeguarding Bill

Senator Colette Kelleher is working on a new law called the Adult Safeguarding Bill.



Safeguarding is about keeping people safe from abuse and harm.

During 2017, Senator Kelleher and Inclusion Ireland worked together to consult with people with intellectual disabilities to find out what they thought of the new law.



## National Safeguarding Committee

Inclusion Ireland is a member of the National safeguarding Committee and represents people with intellectual disability on this group.

We supported the research for the Committee's report on the Wards of Court report and helped with a public opinion survey on safeguarding.



## HSE Safeguarding Policy

In 2017, the HSE were checking their safeguarding policy.

We had meetings with groups in Sligo, Tullamore and Cork for the HSE.



Everyone who took part enjoyed giving their thoughts about how to make their safety stronger and protect their rights.

## National Women's Strategy



Inclusion Ireland made a submission on the Government's new plan to support women and girls to be equal citizens.

Our submission talked about the issues facing women and girls with disabilities including;

- Barriers to getting a job.
- Accessing health services including reproductive and maternity health services.
- Not enough protection from sexual offences legislation.
- No clear rights to sexual relationships.
- Lack of support for parents with disabilities.
- Difficulty in accessing courts.



Inclusion Ireland asked the government to ratify the UNCRPD and to consider these issues facing women and girls with disabilities.

## Deinstitutionalisation and Community Living



Inclusion Ireland made a submission to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

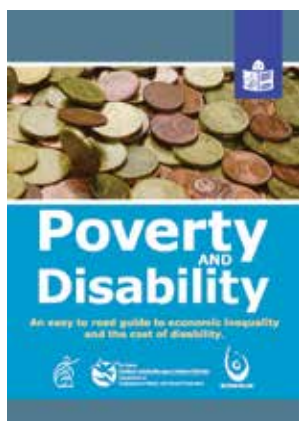
The UNCRPD Committee checks if countries are putting the UN Convention into practice.

In 2017, the Committee looked at Article 19 – Living in the Community.



Our submission talked about all the things that Ireland has to do to support people with disabilities to live in the community.

# Social Justice



## A Guide to Poverty and Disability

Inclusion Ireland published a guide to poverty and disability.

Poverty is when you are poor and you have less money coming in than going out. It means that a person's standard of living is below a suitable level.



We published an Easy to Read guide and a plain English guide.

The guide gives accessible information on poverty and the cost of disability.

The guide also talks about how the Government can take action to end poverty.



People with intellectual disabilities were involved in making sure the guide was accessible.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection gave Inclusion Ireland money to make the guide.





## Gender Pay Gap Submission

Inclusion Ireland made a submission to the Department of Justice about the gender pay gap.

There is a gap in how much men and women are being paid in Ireland.



There are very low numbers of women with disabilities in jobs.

Women with disabilities have less money and less access to pensions because of this.



The government should collect more information on jobs for women with disabilities to help make new plans for them.



## Comprehensive Employment Strategy Submission

Inclusion Ireland made a submission to the National Disability Authority (NDA) on the Comprehensive Employment Strategy.



We said that people with disabilities should take part in the making of the strategy.



We said people with disabilities should get more support to go further in education and to get a job.



We said that there should be proper transport for people with disabilities so they can travel to work.

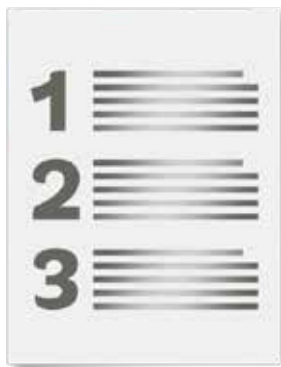
## Pre-Budget Consultations



The Government decides how to spend Ireland's money in the budget each year.



Inclusion Ireland invited people to meetings to give their opinion on how they want the Government to spend the money.



At each meeting people made a list of what was most important in their lives.



People thought the cost of disability, housing, transport, education, employment, education and disability services were all important.



After the meetings, Inclusion Ireland made a submission to the Government to tell them what was important to people with intellectual disabilities in the budget.

# Democracy

## Working Group 3 Transforming Lives



Working Group 3 is part of the Transforming Lives Programme to make services in the HSE work better for everyone.

Working Group 3 is a group of people with disabilities, family members, people from disability organisations and staff from the HSE.



Paddy Connolly is the Chairman of Working Group 3.



The group worked together to make a plan called Ordinary Lives in Ordinary Places: A Plan for Effective Participation in Decision Making for People with Disabilities and Families.



The Plan is all about supporting people with disabilities and families to be more involved in decisions at local, regional and national levels.



The Plan will be launched in 2018.

## Family Forum Meetings



In 2011 the Time to Move on from Congregated settings, A Strategy for Community Inclusion was published.



Inclusion Ireland has been meeting with family groups across Ireland to provide support, to give information and to help them build their own network.



In the centres where families have chosen to meet, they feel that they have a voice and a right to be heard.



Inclusion Ireland has given talks on Advocacy Skills, the Assisted Decision Making Act, on life in the community, on Government policies and on many other topics of interest at the family meetings.

## Personal Budgets

Inclusion Ireland held two seminars on personal budgets in 2017.

Personal Budget is about choosing how you spend the money you get from a service.

We hosted one in Dublin in April with LEAP and the Centre for Disability Law and Policy, NUI Galway.

Over 100 people were there.

Minister Finian McGrath spoke about a plan for personal budgets and said “within this the voice of the individual will be heard throughout”.

Two sessions were held on personal budgets in Sligo, one for disabled people and one for families.

Christy Lynch, Chair of the Taskforce on Personal Budgets, gave an update on the work of the Taskforce. Willie Walsh from Clann Beo spoke about different ways a personal budget can be used.







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# Autonomy

## Making a Will Project

Inclusion Ireland has a project about wills with a law firm called Mason, Hayes and Curran, and with LinkedIn.

The project is supported by the Public Interest Law Alliance (PILA).



We match people with intellectual disabilities who want to make a will with solicitors who have free time to make their wills.



We gave training to the solicitors to understand what intellectual disabilities are.

It is free to make a will with this project.

## Abhainn Ri Festival



Inclusion Ireland hosted a self-advocacy event as part of the Abhainn Ri Festival in Callan, Kilkenny, in July 2017.



The festival was celebrating the idea of 'public declaration'.



Self-advocates from the Inclusion Ireland Self-Advocacy Subcommittee chaired and ran the event.

All shared their experiences of self-advocacy and speaking up for themselves.



The day was a big success and lots of people took part in the event.

## Essential Principles of Personal Budgets



Inclusion Ireland published a paper called 'Essential Principles of Personal Budgets'.

'Essential principles' are what must be in place for personal budgets to be fair and to work for anyone with a disability.



We said that personal budgets must be available for any person with a disability, no matter what ages they are.

We said people should have a choice about how they get their personal budget.



We worked on this paper with Leap, the Centre for Independent Living, and the Centre for Disability Law and Policy in the University in Galway.

## **Galway Educate Together National School**



Galway Educate Together National School asked us for support on their campaign to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

We gave teachers information and ideas on campaigning. Children learned about the UNCRPD in their classes.



The Student Council organised a petition and wrote letters to the Minister and to local newspapers.

The school shared the information with other schools who were asked to become part of the campaign.



## **Sanctuary the Movie and Conversations**

Actors with intellectual disability from the Blue Teapot Theatre star in the movie "Sanctuary."

The film was shown to packed audiences in Offaly and in Sligo Town.



The film is about the right to relationships, being close to someone and being independent.

Inclusion Ireland worked with The Sligo Film Society and Saint Angela's to show the film at The Model arts centre in Sligo.

The actors in the film, Charlene Kelly and Kieran Copping, spoke to the audience at the Birr Theatre and Arts Centre.

## Advocacy Support

Inclusion Ireland supports people with disabilities and their families to get the rights and services they are entitled to, here are some examples:

### Example 1:



A young boy with autism was refused a place in a secondary school.

Inclusion Ireland supported his family to take an appeal to the Department of Education and Skills.

He got a place in the school after the appeal.

### Example 2:



A woman called Inclusion Ireland one day who wanted to work but did not know about supports to get a job.

Inclusion Ireland supported the woman to go to Employability where she got a full time job.

### Example 3:



A mother has two children with autism and intellectual disabilities.

She did not get access to state welfare payments for the boys.

Inclusion Ireland supported the woman to have a review and an appeal. She was awarded payments for one of the boys.

### Example 4:



A young child was finishing preschool. A psychologist said if she had another year in her local preschool she would learn well in mainstream school and would not need to go to a special school 40 miles away.

The child was a few months too old for another year at preschool. Inclusion Ireland supported the parent to deal with the Department of Children and she was allowed to spend another year in preschool.

# Statistics



**62 organisations and 173 individuals were members of Inclusion Ireland.**



**15,130 people followed Inclusion Ireland's social media.**



**Inclusion Ireland had 1,814 advocacy calls.**



**1,811 people got Inclusion Ireland newsletters.**



**Inclusion Ireland had 201,170 views on our website.**



# Acknowledgements and Partners



Thank you to our members, self-advocacy groups, and parent and family groups who we worked with during the year.



## **Inclusion Ireland receives funding from:**

Health Service Executive (HSE), Pobal: Dormant Accounts Fund, Pobal: Scheme to Support national Organisations (SSNO), Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC), the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, and Inclusion Ireland membership fees.



## **Inclusion Ireland accounts:**

All members of Inclusion Ireland will receive a copy of the annual audited accounts for 2017.

The accounts tell us where Inclusion Ireland's money came from and how we spent that money.

Members will also receive an Easy to Read summary of Inclusion Ireland's financial report for 2017.

Inclusion Ireland's audited accounts are available for you to look at on our website, [www.inclusionireland.ie](http://www.inclusionireland.ie).



## **We have partnered with the following in 2017**

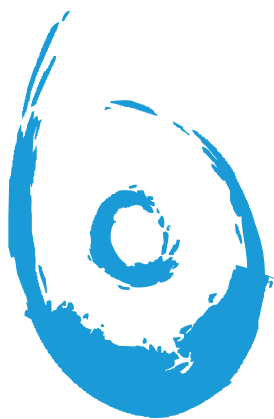


Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta an Duine agus Comhionannas  
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostalochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection





**INCLUSION IRELAND**

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