



Inclusion Ireland

The National Association for People
with an Intellectual Disability.

Annual Report

Easy-to-Read

[InclusionIreland.ie](https://inclusionireland.ie)





Inclusion Ireland

The National Association for People
with an Intellectual Disability.

About Us



Inclusion Ireland works towards the full inclusion of people with an intellectual disability by supporting people to have their voices heard, and by advocating for rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD).



Our vision is an inclusive Ireland where people with an intellectual disability are supported to live and participate as an equal member within the community.



We will continue to work every day for people with intellectual disabilities and their families until we achieve our shared vision of a more inclusive Ireland.

Our Values



Respect is about valuing the life of every person with an intellectual disability. It is also about respecting different people's opinions and ways of living.



Inclusion is about people with intellectual disabilities taking part in all parts of Irish life. We believe that it's a better world when we are all in it together. We don't think that people with intellectual disabilities should be separate.



Equality is about a fairer society where disabled people have equal rights. We work towards a time when every person with an intellectual disability is treated fairly and has the same rights as every other citizen.



Voice is about people with an intellectual disability having their say and being heard in Irish society. This includes people who communicate in different ways.



Choice is about supporting and respecting people with an intellectual disability to live lives that they want to live, with the support they need.



Derval McDonagh

CEO Inclusion Ireland

Welcome to our Annual Report 2023.

I am proud to share our work with you and to highlight the impact we have had as we work for a more inclusive Ireland.

This year was the first year of our new Strategic Plan. It was created with our members and supporters to reflect the lived experience of people with an intellectual disability.

We recognise the many barriers people with an intellectual disability face in accessing their right to education, to housing, to a decent standard of living, to services and supports.

Together we can raise our collective voices until people in positions of power understand and empathise. Together we can make Ireland more inclusive.

It has never been more important to us that you become a member of Inclusion Ireland. The bigger our membership, the louder our voice, the more we cannot be ignored! Together we can make change happen, for people with an intellectual disability to have their voices heard and their rights respected.



Ashley Sands

Chairperson Inclusion Ireland

Welcome to Inclusion Ireland's 2023 Annual Report.

We invite you to read about Inclusion Ireland's work in 2023.

In 2023, the board supported Inclusion Ireland to improve how we work and to deliver on our Strategic Plan.

I am very proud to chair our board. What drives us is our ambition for a fairer Ireland for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

We know that there is a long road to travel. People continue to experience significant barriers in accessing education, housing, employment and services as should be their right under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

I would like to thank you, our members and supporters. We so appreciate your support and giving your time and your expertise to advance our mission. Together we can make a more Inclusive Ireland.



Strategic Plan

A **strategic plan** is a plan that talks about what we want to see happen and why.

It then looks at how we can help to make these things happen. These are our **goals**.



Inclusion Ireland's Strategic Plan 2023-2026 shaped everything we did this year. Our strategic plan has three key strategic goals.

Goal 1: Campaigning.



We campaign for real change in people's lives



Goal 2: Self Advocacy and Participation.

We support people with intellectual disabilities to be valued and to participate in society.



Goal 3: Accessible Communication.

We are leaders in accessible information and communication.



Our Work On: Campaigning



Campaigning is a core part of Inclusion Ireland's work. We promote change in society so that people with an intellectual disability are treated as equal and valued citizens.



In 2023, in close partnership with our self-advocates, we designed and implemented campaigns around the Government Budget, as well as in housing, employment, the Cost of Disability, the Wage Subsidy Scheme, and education.



Budget Submission 2024

In putting together our Budget Submission for 2024, we consulted with people with an intellectual disability and their families.

Money and the Cost of Disability were the main concerns for people who completed the survey.

Housing



In 2023, Inclusion Ireland continued its close engagement with the Housing Agency and the Department of Housing on the implementation of the National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities (NHSPD).



The Implementation Plan for the Strategy was released in June 2023 and we are a member of the group that oversees how the plan is working.



Inclusion Ireland regularly meets with our Housing Working Group which includes members who have an intellectual disability.



We sit on several Housing Disability Steering groups and are working on helping them to be accessible so that self-advocates can sit on them too.



We continued to work on supporting decongregation with Aurora: Enriching Lives, Enriching Communities.

Employment



We led a project to help support more people with an intellectual disability to enter the workforce. This was funded by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.



A working group that had 6 members with an intellectual disability did training on employment law.



Their valuable work then included:

3 events to teach people with an intellectual disability about employment and learn about their experiences.

The launch of the Employment Code of Practice.



They released their exciting podcast called **Make it Work!**



There were 3 episodes of the podcast.

These looked at the path to employment for people with an intellectual disability.





Wage Subsidy Scheme

Inclusion Ireland advocated for changes to the Wage Subsidy Scheme. The minimum weekly hours required for eligibility were lowered from 21 to 15.



In the past, the scheme left out many people with an intellectual disability, who often work on a part-time basis.

Cost of Disability



The Government created a document that asked people to talk about certain changes to how disability support payments are made. This was called a Green Paper.



We took part in consultation events in Dublin, Cork and Athlone.



Advocates called for the Green Paper to be scrapped, and it was.



Education

Inclusion Ireland was delighted to have been invited to join the advisory committee for the review of the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act.



It is very important to make sure that the Act works well and is in line with children's rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.



In 2023, we released 'The Pathway to Inclusive Education'. This was a report which brought together the voices of young people with an intellectual disability, families, policymakers, and educators.



We also made an easy to read video about it that explored the journey to inclusive education and what it could look like.



Our Vision for Inclusive Education

We want to see children welcomed in their local school with the same equality of access as all other children.



Inclusive schools must have the things they need to meet all children's needs in the community.



They must be designed so that everyone can use and experience everything. This is called Inclusive Design for Learning. There should be lots of areas to learn in different ways. Learning can happen anywhere.



The child's voice must be front and centre.



Staff in inclusive schools must be trained and have the expertise to support all children. Flexibility, creativity and rights-based supports are at the heart of inclusive education.

Review of Ireland by the UNCRC



Inclusion Ireland took part in a group calling for the review of Ireland by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).



Inclusion Ireland wrote a detailed report to the UNCRC. This is called a submission.

It talked about the challenges faced by children with intellectual disabilities in Ireland.



The submission highlighted the lack of advocacy services for disabled children, and the limited access to inclusive education. This included examples of:



- seclusion and restraint.



- poor access to the services that they need.



Our Work On: Self-Advocacy & Participation

People with an intellectual disability in Ireland are often left out of important conversations that affect their lives.



Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 aims to support people with an intellectual disability to be valued and to effectively take part in society.

In 2023, self-advocates played a central role in the work Inclusion Ireland does.

They took part in discussions about living with an intellectual disability at various events and forums.

We also celebrated International Day of Persons with Disabilities with our self-advocates taking centre stage.





Inclusion Ireland Self-Advocates, 2023

Kellie Byrne, Ellen Gavin and Jimmy Dooner were trained and supported to present on the Public Sector Duty at Citizens Information Offices across the country.



Margaret Turley presented at the Public and Patient Involvement in Health and Social Care Research in Ireland event about her work as a researcher.



Tamara Byrne continued her important work as an advocate with Inclusion Ireland and the European Disability Forum Youth Committee.

She addressed many groups about issues including job struggles, inequality and poverty.



Paul Alford has worked as a Self-Advocacy Project Worker at Inclusion Ireland for 19 years. He talks about his own journey and how he has learned how to use his voice.

He says, “It is very important for people with intellectual disability to have their voices heard”.



Inclusion Ireland Self-Advocates, 2023

Lydia Fisher says that she did not know what she was missing out on until she joined Inclusion Ireland.



She was involved with our Employment Working Group and tells us about this experience. She says, “Through this experience, I learned a great deal about employment and how I can assist others in finding jobs”.

Supporting Self-Advocates



We worked together with self-advocates and advocacy supporters to make a guide called Seak Up, Speak Out.



This training aims to support inclusive spaces where people with an intellectual disability can express themselves and feel valued.

Working with Other Organisations on Participation in 2023

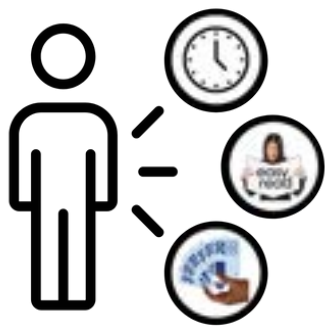


The **Irish Banking Culture Board** held customer listening sessions with people with an intellectual disability.

This was to give a voice to people who often don't get to have their voices heard by the decision makers in banking.



We worked with them to carry out 4 (four) of these across the country so they could hear from people with an intellectual disability.



At these groups, the IBCB learned how to meet everyone's needs in the best way for them.



The **Oireachtas Disability Group** is made of 6 (six) organisations which speak for disability service providers and advocacy organisations.



In 2023, the group met with TDs and Ministers to advocate on issues such as Housing, Cost of Disability, and disability services.

Working with Other Organisations on Participation in 2023



Inclusion Ireland and the Health Service Executive (HSE) held an event together about the Assisted Decision Making Act.

The HSE told everyone what the Act meant for the lives of people with an intellectual disability.



Everyone talked about it and self-advocates were able to have their voices heard.

We also worked with the HSE on:



- a survey that asked about Residential and Day Services.

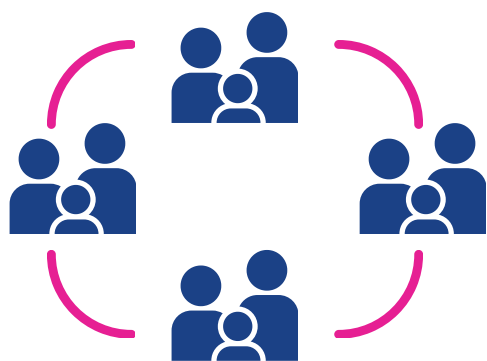


- a guide for HSE and HSE-funded services with ILMI. This guide told people about how important it is to involve and listen to people with an intellectual disability.



- developing a Self-Advocacy strategy to set a model for how to involve disabled individuals in decision-making processes. This was presented at a HSE event called 'Our Voice, Our Choice' in November 2023.





Supporting Families

Inclusion Ireland continued to support family members and friends of people with intellectual disabilities through our **Connect Family Network (CFN)**.

We held information sessions including:



- Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 and Decision Supportive Service (DSS) with Áine Flynn, Director of the DSS.
- Organising a Family Support Group.
- Education: Advocating for Your Child
- Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC).



Members of the CFN added to Inclusion Ireland's advocacy work through focus groups, meetings and surveys. Their input helped to shape how we do our work and let us know what people needed.



We also worked with the Laois Offaly Children and Young People's Services Committee. Together we made a guide about how best to support children and young people with disabilities. It included a directory of supports and services.



International Day of Disabilities

Inclusion Ireland joined up with Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities to work on an event for International Day of Persons with Disabilities.



People with an intellectual disability came from across Ireland on December 4th to talk about about living and getting around in their communities.



They talked about problems including how it can be hard to get to places in their local area.



The event showed how County or City Councils can work with transport services to make communities more welcoming to everyone.

It was led by people with an intellectual disability and kept their experience and voice at the heart of the event.



Our Work on: Accessible Communications



Access to information helps people to know their rights and to have a voice. It supports respect and community inclusion. This is why it is an important part of our Strategic Plan.



We want a future where accessible information is the norm, especially for people with higher support needs.



We are working hard on our accessible communications department along with easy-to-read experts. We have been supporting accessible communication across the country in 2023.

Accessible Communications Efforts in 2023



Our easy-to-read experts are people with an intellectual disability who use easy-to-read themselves. We have been working together on lots of projects to make information more accessible.



These include work with the HSE, the European Disability Forum, The Housing Agency and disability service providers across Ireland.



All of our Inclusion Ireland documents have been co-produced with our easy-to-read experts. These include our:

- Strategic Plan
- Pre-Budget Submission
- Annual Report
- Annual General Meeting
- Inclusive education report, The Pathway to Inclusive Education.



We joined with partner groups in Europe to work on easy-to-read research. This was to learn the best ways of teaching people about easy-to-read and how to make it well.



We tested a new training workshop. This will teach people how to make sure all of their work is accessible and inclusive.



Finances



Inclusion Ireland Accounts

All Inclusion Ireland members receive a copy of the 2023 accounts by email. The accounts say where we got money and how we spent it.

Income (money we got).....€960, 762

Expenditure (money we spent).....€1,0202,133

Surplus spend (extra costs).....€100,843

Assets (money we have)

Fixed Assets - Building.....€432,400

Fixed Assets - Computers, desks etc.....€1,619

Current Assets (money in the bank).....€264,075

Current Assets (debtors).....€31,185

Total.....€729,279



Finances

Money we owe

Mortgage account.....	€335,908
Other bills that are not yet paid.....	€92,323
Total.....	€428,231
Overall Assets.....	€301,048



Thank you.

Thank you to all of our members, self-advocacy groups and parent and family groups that we worked with in 2023.

Acknowledgements and thank you

Thank you to all of our members, self-advocacy groups, and parent and family groups that we worked with this year.

Aparticular thanks to our funders; Pobal, HSE, Irish Human Rights and Equality commission, the Community Foundation of Ireland, Department of Children, Equality, Disability Integration and Youth. We could not advocate for a fairer Ireland without you.



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administered by Pobal to do this work.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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



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